THE

Rector of Sutton

Committed with the

Dean of St. Paul's.

OR,

A DEFENCE of Dr. STILLINGFLEET's *Irenicum*, his Discourses of *Excommunication*, *Idolatry*, and other Writings; against his late Sermon,

Entituled, THE

Mischief of Separation.

BY

The Author of the *Christian Temper*.

In a Letter to a Friend.

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THE

Rector of Sutton

Committed with the

Parish of Saint Paul's.

An Epiſtle to the Reader,
By a Friend of the Author's.

He Reverend Author is one of that Chriſtian Temper, *that he does not in the leaſt deſign in theſe Sheets to blemiſh the Reputation of the learned and reverend Dean, but only to infer from his own Writings, an honeſt Defence of the Nonconformiſts Practice, and their juſt diſcharge from the Imputation of Schiſm.*

Poſſibly, ſome may judg the Nonconformiſts diſingenuous, in returning the Doctor's Irenicum *upon himſelf, which he is willing (conſidering his preſent Circumſtances) ſhould be ſtifled, and not brought into Judgment againſt him: Yet thoſe that truly love and honour him, have that Charity to believe that preferment has not extinguiſhed that Catholick Spirit of his which appears in that excellent Book, at leaſt they hope he will not when he comes to die, repent that he did once offer ſuch excellent* Weapon-Salve, *which if it had been applied, our Churches Wounds would have been in a great meaſure healed. But to many it is apparent that the Doctor does ſtill retain the ſame Sentiments, for he has ſaid that in other Treatiſes, which is a* ſufficient Plea for the Diſſenters. *I ſhall only cite two or three Paſſages, out of his Treatiſe of the* Idolatry of the Church of Rome, *which was publiſhed ſince he came from* Sutton *to a higher Station in the Church, (which Paſſages ſome judge to be a ſufficient Anſwer to his Sermon of* May 3.) viz.

Pag. 7. (*Edit.* 1.) We are ſure that wilful Ignorance, or chooſing a worſe Church before a better, is a damnable Sin, and, unrepented of, deſtroys Salvation.

P. 8. A Chriſtian as a Chriſtian is bound to chooſe the Communion of the pureſt Church, and not to leave that for a corrupt one, though called never ſo Catholick. *And in Pag.* 43. *The Papiſt in reply to the Doctor ſays,* I agree ſo far with him, that every Chriſtian is bound to chooſe the Communion of the pureſt Church.

And not only the Doctor, but ſeveral other eminent Men of the Church of England, *have in their Writings ſaid enough to excuſe the Nonconformiſts, and to infer the great* Miſchiefs of Impoſition, *I ſhall only inſtance in two or three Paſſages out of Biſhop* Taylor's Caſes of Conſcience, *'tis well known what reverence that Author's Books are in at this time, even with thoſe*

that are most zealous for the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England.

Rule 2. Pag. 222. (first Edit.) *Speaking of the commanding Power of the Church, he says, This is to be added, that because this power is such* —— it is only left to the People to do it or not, under pain of Sin, but they are not to incur spiritual Censures upon the stock of non-compliance in things not simply necessary, or of essential Duty —— *Page* 301. Ecclesiastical Laws must be imposed so as to leave our *Liberty* unharmed.

Pag. 303. Ecclesiastical Laws are made relative to time and place, to Persons and Occasions, subject to all changes, fitted for use and the advantage of the Churches, ministring to Edification, and complying with Charity. Whatsoever Ecclesiastical Law hath not these Conditions, the Churches ought no to receive, because they are Impediments, not Advantages to the Service of God: if they be thus qualified, no good Man will refuse them; if they be not, they are the Laws of Tyrants, not of Spiritual Fathers.

Pag. 310. Laws of burthen are always against Charity.

P. 314. Ceremonies oblige no longer than they minister to the end of Charity.

Rule 20. *Pag.* 323. Ecclesiastical Laws must ever promote the Service of God, and the good of Souls, but must never put a snare or stumbling-block to Consciences—. The Authority which the Lord hath given is for Edification, and not for Destruction, 2 *Cor.* 10.8. & 13.10.

Pag. 325. ——Tho significant Ceremonies can be for edification to the Church in some Degree, and in some Persons, yet it's to be considered whether the introducing of such things, doth not destroy the Church, not only in her Christian Liberty, but in the Simplicity, and Purity, and Spirituality of her Religion, by insensible changing it into Ceremonial and External Service.——

Ibid. —— A symbolical Rite of humane Invention, to signify what it does not effect, and then introduced into the solemn Service of God, is so like those vain Imaginations and Representations forbidden in the second Commandment, that the very suspicion is more against Edification, than their use can pretend to.—— *With many more Passages of of the like Nature, which the reverend Mr.* Baxter *hath gathered together out of the said Bishop* Taylor's Cases of Conscience, *in his second part of the* Nonconformists Plea, *from* pag. 89. *to* pag. 107.

The Reader is desired to excuse the *Errata*, the Author being far from the Press.

QUERIES.

Query I.

WHether this Sermon of the Doctor's be more likely to convince, or his first Writings to confirm Dissenters? And whether he be more uninterested now (See his several Conferences, pag. 147.) or less fallible? Or whether his Readers (that weighing the Reason of his former Hypothesis, were drawn to be much of his Mind) must now change their Judgments without his giving better Reason to the contrary, that is, without confuting a considerable part of his Irenicum; only upon his declaring, that his Opinion concerning those Matters is now changed, or saying Older and Wiser, that he hath since considered things better, or that he now sees further, and would not yeild so far as before (being set on higher Ground?) See several Conferences, pag. 148.

II. (Upon the Epistle, beginning of the second Page) *Whether a lasting Union be impossible to be attained, without submission to the present establish'd Rule? Or whether it were not more possible and easy to be attained by a Rule of mutual Forbearance?*

III. *Whether a Man of Peace (as the Doctor no doubt would be accounted) that (I suppose) would not pretend exemption from that great Duty of studying the things that make for Peace and Unity, and that prayeth (as* Serm. pag. 3.) "*God deliver us from such cruel ways of "Peace, and such destructive means of Unity (as the* Roman *Church useth) may not upon second, and serious Thoughts find out another way to Peace and Union among us,* viz. *That peaceable Dissenters (agreeing with the Church of* England *in all things necessary) be tolerated (though*

they cannot in all things comply with the late eſtabliſh'd Rule?) Which if it could once be obtained of Rulers, Conformiſts then would not have that occaſion or encouragement to fly out againſt their Brethren as Separatiſts, and Schiſmaticks; as on the other hand Non-Conformiſts might not have the like occaſion to entertain hard Thoughts of them again, as their Accuſers, and ſuch as would inſtigate Rulers, Magiſtrates, and others to a further ſevere proſecution of them?

IV. *If none were tolerated in the Miniſtry, or in Communion with the Church, but thoſe whoſe faults were no greater than the Non-Conformity of ſober Diſſenters, whether we ſhould not have very few Miniſters left in* England, *and very thin Congregations? Or whether indeed a total extirpation of the Miniſtry, and utter diſſolution of the Church would not follow on it?*

V. *Whether the Apoſtle requiring all to walk by the ſame Rule, intended any other Rule, than what was given to the Church in the Apoſtles time? Whether it be not the ſame Rule, which all that had then attained to the Knowledg, Belief and Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, were then obliged to walk by, and all Chriſtians ever ſince? And whether the Chriſtian Church in the Apoſtles times had any ſuch Rule, as that to which the Doctor would have us all conform? And if Men will look in the preſent eſtabliſh'd Rule, as conſequently binding, when eſtabliſhed, whether they muſt not ſuppoſe Men now to have Authority ſo far equal with the Apoſtles? And that all other Chriſtians (at leaſt, that hear of the Rule eſtabliſhed in* England) *ſin againſt that Apoſtolical Precept,* Phil. 3. 16. *that comply not with* England's *eſtabliſh'd Rule? Or elſe muſt they not ſay, that with the Apoſtle, that is ſtill the ſame Rule, which is one thing here in the Church of* England, *and which is another quite different in other Churches, as in the Churches of* France, Holland, &c.

VI. *Whether it be ſinful ſeparation for ſuch Miniſters and Chriſtians as conform not hand over head to any publickly eſtabliſhed Rule, to aſſemble for the Worſhip of God? Whether muſt we not worſhip God, but only according to ſuch Rules as our Governors pleaſe to eſtabliſh? If we are not ever bound to conform to the Rules ſuch may eſtabliſh, or to neglect God's publick Worſhip, What Limits are to be ſet here? And how may we be put out of doubt, that we are ſo bound to the preſent Rule eſtabliſhed?*

VII. *Whe-*

VII. *Whether it can ever be proved ſinful for Rulers to ſuffer Miniſters and Chriſtians to worſhip God, that would worſhip him as near as they can according to Scripture Rule, if they cannot be ſatisfyed they ſhould do ſo complying with the preſent eſtabliſh'd Rule? Or whether Rulers might not lawfully tolerate ſuch? And whether it would not be very ſinful for ſuch Diſſenters either wholly to omit worſhipping God publickly, or to worſhip God (againſt their Judgment and Conſciences) according to the eſtabliſhed Rule?*

VIII. *If "The preſerving the Peace of the Church, and preventing "Separation, was the great Meaſure the Apoſtle went by, (as the Doctor ſays, Serm. pag. 15.) Whether this ſhould not alſo be a meaſure to other Church-Governors, and thoſe Church-Guides that pretend to follow the Apoſtle's Example? And whether ſuch as are for enforcing things unneceſſary, and doubtful at leaſt, if not ſinful, which they cannot but know will ſadly diſturb, and greatly divide the Church, whether (I ſay) ſuch herein keep to the Apoſtles Rule and Meaſure?*

IX. *When many highly conformable Preachers with many of their Hearers fall far ſhort of ſober Non-Conformiſts, as not being ſo much conformed to the Scripture Rule in their Doctrine and Faith, Worſhip, Life and Practice, why may not theſe be taken to belong to the Church, as well as the former, unleſs greater ſtreſs be laid on Conformity to Man's Rule, than on Conformity to God's Rule?*

X. *When thoſe many hundreds of Non-Conformiſts were lawful Miniſters and publick Preachers before they were put out by the eſtabliſhed Rule, and had ſo continued, had it not been for ſuch a Rule eſtabliſhed, notwithſtanding their Judgment was the ſame it is; Whether may it not ſeem a little ſtrange, that they ſhould ceaſe to be Miniſters, or quite forfeit their Miniſterial Liberty, meerly for Non-Conformity to ſuch an eſtabliſhed Rule, when they had a valid Call unto, and could perform all Acts of their Miniſterial Function without it, and when it might be more queſtioned, Whether indeed they deſerved to have their Liberty continued, if they had conformed to ſuch a Rule, as whether they did not Conform, meerly to keep in their Places againſt their Judgments? And how little Hope was there, that ſuch would be faithful to God, and the Souls of Men in the Miniſtry, that cared not to be ſo unfaithful to their own Souls, acting againſt their Conſciences? If they*

forfeit not their Liberty by their ſimple Judgment in thoſe Points, but that indeed ſuch Miniſters might very well be at leaſt allowed, and tolerated in any Church of Chriſt, Whether would they be more unworthy in not practiſing contrary, or in practiſing contrary to their Judgments?

XI. *Whether there be any true Church (organized) of Apoſtolical Inſtitution, that hath not the juſt Right and Power to govern and reform it ſelf? And whether the Doctor will aſſert this Right and Power in all our Parochial Congregations? If not, how will he prove, that to ſeparate from a Parochial Congregation is to ſeparate from a true Church? If yea, then what will become of his eſtabliſhed Rule, which he would have all conform unto?*

XII. *Whether ſuch as would have all debarred of the ordinary means of Salvation, that cannot enjoy them at their Pariſh-Church, or that cannot ſatisfy themſelves that Communion there at preſent it lawful (though we ſhould ſuppoſe theſe laſt in an error) Whether ſuch (I ſay) manifeſt any great Charity towards the Souls of theſe their poor Brethren, or care what becomes of them? Whether they are not yet to learn what that meaneth,* I will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice? *And if the preaching of the Goſpel be ordinarily neceſſary to the working of Faith, to Mens Converſion and Salvation, and if Conformity to the eſtabliſhed Rule (ſuppoſing it lawful, yet) is not ſo neceſſary; Whether it be right in the ſight of God, and pleaſing to him, and whether the Souls of others debarred from the means of Salvation have reaſon to thank them for it, that they are againſt any Miniſters preaching the Goſpel, that cannot conform to the eſtabliſhed Rule? So, whether they that would have Multitudes untaught, and God's Worſhip by many neglected, and Lords Days greatly profaned, rather than any but Conformiſts ſhould be employed in Miniſterial work, Whether they do not ſadly croſs and thwart, and make void the Scripture-Rule, to ſet up and keep up their Church-Rule?*

SIR,

SIR,

I Now return you Dr. *Stillingfleet's* Sermon, which the other Week you would needs thruſt into my Hand, deſiring me to peruſe, and give you my Notes upon it. To the latter of your Deſires (though I then promiſed nothing) upon the reading of the Sermon, I ſoon inclined; in part to ſatisfy your Deſire, and in part to ſatisfy my own Mind. You cannot but look for many Imperfections in ſuch an haſty Birth. As (it may be) ſome parts wanting, ſome redundant, ſome miſplaced. But not having further leiſure at preſent, you will take it as it is, and cover its Defects with a candid Interpretation. I hope you know me ſo well, as to be perſwaded, that though I may err, I would neither be Heretick nor Schiſmatick.

Epiſt. Dedic. The Doctor ſays, *His only deſign was to prevent any occaſion of the Perſecution of Diſſenters, by finding out a certain Foundation for a laſting Union among our ſelves.*

Anſw. They that deſign ſuch a thing, ſhould plead for, and endeavour (in their places) the taking off of thoſe Impoſitions, which are the known Cauſe of our Diviſions, and have made ſo many Diſſenters. As he ſays, *Irenic. pag.* 121. 'Were 'we ſo happy but to take off things granted unneceſſary by all, 'and ſuſpected by many, and judged unlawful by ſome; and 'to make nothing the bounds of our Communion, but what 'Chriſt hath done, *viz.* one Faith, one Baptiſm, *&c.* allowing a Li'berty for matters of indifferency, and bearing with the Weakneſs of 'thoſe who cannot bear things which others account lawful, we might 'indeed be reſtored to a true primitive Luſtre far ſooner than by fur'biſhing up ſome antiquated Ceremonies, which can derive their Pe'digree no higher, than from ſome ancient Cuſtom and Tradition. 'God will one day convince Men, that the Union of the Church lies 'more in the Unity of Faith and Affection, than in Uniformity of 'doubtful Rites and Ceremonies. (How like Mr. *Corbit* of Church-Unity,

Unity, *pag.* 30.) 'The Bond of Church-Communion ſhould be ſome-'thing common to ſtrong and weak Chriſtians, *&c.* (*ibid. pag.* 122.) But not a Word of this found here in all the Sermon.

2. Though we hold Communion with them, as far as we can, yet if we come not up fully to their eſtabliſhed Rule, (as, if we are not ſatisfyed to receive the Sacrament kneeling, to bring Children to be Croſſed, as well as Baptized, *&c.*) we are ſtill liable to be proſecuted in their Courts, and troubled. That unleſs the Doctor hoped by this Sermon to win Diſſenters to a full Conformity, his Deſign was not likely to have ſucceſs.

Ibid. *But, if after themſelves are pleaſed with Condeſcenſions to their own Minds, any think it fit that others ſhould be tyed up, notwithſtanding their diſſatisfaction, the World will judge it too great partiality in them.*

Anſ. They would not preſcribe Terms to others: but think, that none ſhould preſcribe other Terms of Communion, than Chriſt hath made neceſſary by his Laws; and that all Chriſtians ſhould look upon themſelves as obliged to ſuch Terms. Preface to *Iren. p.* 8, 9. 'It would 'be ſtrange the Church ſhould require more than Chriſt himſelf did; 'and make other Conditions of her Communion, than our Saviour 'did of Diſciple-ſhip, *&c.*

Pag. 2. *Although our differences are ſuch as the wiſer Proteſtants abroad, not only condemn, but wonder at them; yet it hath hitherto puzzled the wiſeſt Perſons among us to find out ways to compoſe them.*

Anſ. 1. If we are condemned by others abroad, we may thank our Friends at home, who have miſrepreſented us to the World; while we have not been allowed to plead for our ſelves.

2. Yet poſſibly ſome Proteſtant Churches abroad may wonder, that ſuch Propoſals as have been made for an Accomodation, ſhould be rejected. See *Petition for Peace, pag.* 9. §. 10. The *French* Churches (if they be of the ſame temper, as the Doctor deſcribes them, *Irenic. p.* 122.) muſt needs wonder more at them, than at us. And ſo would our Reformers, that compoſed the Liturgy, if they were alive. As he telleth us (*ibid.*) 'Certainly thoſe holy Men, who did ſeek by any 'means to draw in others, at ſuch a diſtance from their Principles as 'the Papiſts were, did never intend by what they did for that end, to 'exclude any truly tender Conſciences from their Communion. That 'which they laid as a Bait for them, was never intended by them as a 'Hook for thoſe of their own Profeſſion. But the ſame reaſon which 'at that time made them yeild ſo far to them then, would now have 'perſwaded them to alter and lay aſide thoſe things which yeild mat-

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'ter of offence, to any of the ſame Profeſſion with themſelves 'now. (*p.* 125.)

3. The way to compoſe our Differences is not ſo hard to find out. *Zanchy* thought himſelf wiſe enough, to give Counſel in ſuch a Caſe. See his long Epiſtle to Queen *Elizabeth*, *Epiſt. l.* 1. *Col.* 241, &c. The way was, *Non propter veſtes totum corpus Eccleſiæ perdere*, not to deſtroy the Body of the Church for Garments ſake, &c. Not to diſturb the Peace of the Church by urging indifferent things. *Col.* 245. *Ita certe rebus adiaphoris urgendis, turbare pacem Eccleſiæ, & bonos cum impiis, aut etiam bonos inter ſeſe committere, uſque adeo iniquum eſt, ut defendi nullo modo poſſit, ut non immeritò victorem Epiſcopum Romanum hoc nomine reprehenderit Irenæus*, &c. Yea, the Doctor when he recollects himſelf, knows the way exactly to the compoſing of our Differences. Firſt, he hath found out the cauſe of our Differences and Diviſions. (And ſometimes when the Cauſe of a Diſeaſe is known, it is half cured.) See Preface to his *Irenicum p.* 9. 'Without all Controverſy, the main Inlet of all 'the Diſtractions, Confuſions and Diviſions of the Chriſtian World, 'hath been by adding other Conditions of Church-Communion than 'Chriſt hath done. Now as to the perfect cure thereof, See *Irenic. p.* 122. 'And therefore, were there that Spirit of mutual Condeſcen-'tion, which was moſt certainly in *Eccleſiâ primo primitivâ*, as *Gratian* 'ſomewhere ſpeaks, in the firſt and truly Primitive Church in the 'Apoſtles times, our Breaches as to this thing too might ſoon be cloſed 'up, and the Voice of Schiſm be heard among us no more. So here he hath diſcovered to us the way to that, 'Than which nothing ought 'to be more in our Wiſhes (as he ſays *pag.* 1. of his *Serm.*) 'though nothing ſeems more remote from our Hopes, even the Univerſal Peace of the Chriſtian World.

Pag. 3. *All Parties pretend to a zeal for Peace, ſo they may have it in their own way.*

But ſurely all that would ſhew themſelves good Chriſtians, ought to ſeek it, and ſhould be content with it in Chriſt's way. Which is excellently ſet forth by this Learned Doctor, in the Preface to his *Irenic. p.* 8. 'What Ground can there be, why Chriſtians ſhould not 'ſtand upon the ſame terms now, which they did in the time of Chriſt 'and his Apoſtles? —— What Charter hath Chriſt given the Church 'to bind Men up to, more than himſelf hath done? Or to exclude 'thoſe from her Society who may be admitted into Heaven? Will 'Chriſt ever thank Men at the great Day for —— And *p.* 9. 'Whether 'do they conſult for the Churches Peace and Unity, who ſuſpend it up-

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'on such things (as indifferencies?) How far doth the Example of 'our Saviour or his Apostles warrant such rigorous Impositions? Now hath the Doctor upon second thoughts found out a better way, than that which he there commends?

2. Some indeed have made it appear, *that it is not Peace they aim at but Victory*, as the Doctor saith; yet I cannot see, that this is justly to be charged upon those, who have been willing to yeild so far, who have made so fair Proposals, and have earnestly petitioned for Peace, that could *bear with many things in the Constitution of the Church*, (as *Ser. p.* 47,48.) for Peace-sake, which they cannot approve. What though some only pretend a Zeal for Peace, must we say, There are no true Men in the World, because there are so many Apes that imitate them; or that there are no Jewels, because there are so many Counterfeits? As the Doctor, *Orig. Sacr. Epist. Ded. p.* 10.

P. 4. *And we may justly hope for a greater Blessing of God upon us, when we offer up our joint Prayers and Devotions, &c.*

But (*Irenic. p.* 123.) 'It cannot but be looked upon as a Token of 'God's severe displeasure against us, if any, though unreasonable Pro-'posals of Peace between us and the Papists should meet with such en-'tertainment among many; and yet any fair offers of Union and Ac-'comodation among our selves, be so coldly embraced and enter-'tained.

P. 9. *Wherein the Apostle supposes* —— 1. *The necessity of one fixed and certain Rule* ——

But (*Irenic.* Preface *p.* 9.) 'We never read the Apostles making 'Laws but of things supposed necessary. —— *Act.* 15. 28. It was not 'enough with them that the things would be necessary when they had 'required them, but they looked on an antecedent necessity either 'absolute, or for the present State — There were after this great diver-'sities of Practice, and varieties of Observations, among Christians, but 'the Holy Ghost never thought those things fit to be made matters of 'Laws, to which all Parties should conform; All that the Apostles 'required as to these, was mutual Forbearance and Condescension to-'wards each other in them. The Apostles valued not indifferencies 'at all —— And what reason is there why Men should be so strictly tyed 'up to such things, &c. From all which we may clearly infer, that the Rule spoken of [let us walk by the same Rule] cannot be a Rule of unnecessary Orders, Rites, and Ceremonies.

P. 10. *All the question is, what the Apostle means by this Rule, whether only a Rule of Charity and mutual Forbearance, with a liberty of different pra-*

practice; or such a Rule which limits and determines the manner of practice, &c.

Ans. 1. That of Charity and mutual Forbearance is but part of that same Rule Christians are to walk by: But a part it is certainly. And therefore,

2. Without question, the Apostle meaneth no such Rules, or Canons Ecclesiastical, as are contrary to the Rule of Charity and mutual Forbearance, with a Liberty of Practice different in some things.

3. This Rule for Uniformity of Practice is the Scripture Rule. This is the Rule to which Christians must conform. And as for other things, we have the Doctor's Word for it, (in that place last cited) 'The A-'postles valued not indifferencies at all —— And what reason is there 'why Men should be so strictly tyed up to such things, which they may 'do, or let alone, and yet be very good Christians still? So that unless the Doctor's Mind be changed, he cannot say, the Apostle meaneth a Rule limiting and determining the practice of such things.

P. 11. By what follows, the Doctor seems to understand some Directions and Rules of Government and Order, given them at *Philippi*, when a Church was first formed among them. Which is a private Interpretation, but fittest for the Doctor's purpose. And yet it will fall short too of proving it Mens Duty to walk by the Rule set up by a Church, till it be proved that such a Church's Rule is consonant and agreeable to the Apostle's Rule. But I cannot meet with any Man of Note, giving such a Sense of the Word [*Rule*] here, as the Doctor would put upon it. That Person, who he says (*p.* 28.) is of great and deserved reputation among us, understands it of the Doctrine and Rule of Faith before laid down. (*Vid. Calv. in Phil.* 3. *v.* 15, 16.)—*Sed ante posuit doctrinam in qua consentire, & Regulam ad quam se formare debeant.* And *Zanchy*, *est Canon fidei, & delectionis*, (so the Rule of Charity, and mutual Forbearance comes in) *vitaeque Christianae ad praescriptam formam in sacris literis, conformandae.* And *Grotius*, *Regulam hic intelligit à Christo & Apostolis ejus praescriptam.* Here he understands the Rule prescribed of Christ and his Apostles. *Theodoret*, (who was long before them) *Regulam autem appellavit Evangelicam praedicationem.* And so *Chemnitius* (*Exam. Conc. Trid. par.* 1. *pag.* 33. *b.*) *Quis autem est ille Canon?* Where he puts the Doctor's Question, what is that Rule? And answers, *Sine omni dubitatione illa doctrina, &c.* without all doubt (or Controversy) that Doctrine, which the Apostle, being present, delivered to them *vivâ voce*. Even as the Doctor says, 'When the Apostle 'mentions a Rule, without declaring what it was, we have reason to 'believe, it was such a Rule which they very well knew, which he 'had given to them before.

I only add, (which is more perhaps than the Doctor would have,) Yea, and we all know, or may know, what Rule that was, the Apoſtle plainly affirming, *v.* 1. that he wrote τὰ αὐτὰ the ſame things. As *Chemnitius* further adds, *Quis igitur ſit Canon Pauli, habemus in ipſius ſcriptis, idque ipſius teſtimonio: dicit enim ſe* τὰ αὐτὰ *ſcribere.* What therefore is the Apoſtle *Paul's* Rule, we have in his Writings, and that by his own Teſtimony; for he ſays, that he did write the very ſame things (he preached.) I ſhall take notice but of one more, *ſcil.* the learned and pious Biſhop *Reynolds*, (*Serm.* on *Phil.* 3. 15, 16. in his Works, laſt *Edit. p.* 932.) Who ſpeaks both like a learned Critick, and a ſound Divine, thus, τῷ αὐτῷ στοιχεῖν κανόνι, to walk by the ſame Rule. There ſeemeth to be a double metaphorical Alluſion in the Original Words: The one to a Military March, wherein a Souldier keeps his proper Rank and Station, obeying the Order and Rule which his Commander gives. The other to an Agoniſtical or Athletical Rule, wherein was drawn a White Line, by which the running of the Horſes was to be guided, as the learned Civilian, *Petrus Faber*, in the ſecond Book of his *Agoniſticon*, hath obſerved, c. 7. This Line or Rule in our Chriſtian Race is the Word of God, the Rule of Faith, Love, and a Chriſtian Life (juſt as *Zanchy* before cited) called walking in the Spirit, *Gal.* 5. 16. Walking according to Rule, *Gal.* 6. 16. Thus he. And I hope his Biſhoprick did not alter his Mind as to this Matter. Though however Men change, ſure it is, God's Word, and Truth is ſtill the ſame. And ſurely that Phraſe κανόνι στοιχεῖν, Where the ſame Words are uſed by the Apoſtle, *Gal.* 6. 16. aimeth at higher Matters than Conformity to Church-Orders.

It is to be conſidered, whether the Doctor, arguing from this Text, doth any thing more than beg the queſtion. And thoſe whom he mainly oppoſeth, are for keeping to Scripture-Rule (here intended.) If they cannot come up to the Doctor's eſtabliſhed Rule, it is becauſe to them it ſeems croſs to that ſame Rule all good Chriſtians deſire, and all ought to walk by. So then this Text ſeems to be ill applied to the Doctor's Purpoſe. Which indeed is a thing, I ſhould leaſt have expected from him, finding him again and again blaming others, in his Diſcourſe of the power of Excommunication, for 'hanging it upon 'ſome doubtful places of Scripture (*p.* 4.) imprudently fixing the O'riginal of the Power on ſome ambiguous places of Scripture, which 'may, and (it may be) ought to be taken in a different Sence, (*p.* 15.) Is it not as much amiſs in him, when the Apoſtle is exhorting us to walk by the ſame Scripture-Rule, the Rule of Faith, *&c.* to draw it to a Conforming to Church-Rules, as if this was the main thing intended

ded? *Turpe est Dolori, &c.* And methinks it looks the more oddly, (to use his own Word, *Serm. p.* 38.) when he hath told the World over and over again, that the Apostles and *primo-primitive* Christians had no such established Rule, nor would the Apostles have established such a Rule, as he urgeth us from this Text to come up to, I wonder how he can believe himself, or can hope to perswade any, that will but a little exercise their thinking Faculty, That the Apostle can mean by the same Rule here, such a Rule as was never established by Christ and his Apostles, nor ever would have been to this day, had they still continued upon Earth.

P. 11. *The Apostles did not leave all Persons to act as they judged fit, but did make Rules determining their Practice, and obliging them to Uniformity therein. For might not Men pretend that these were not things in themselves necessary, and might be scrupled by some Persons, and* (p. 12.) *therefore were not fit to be imposed upon any? But I do not find that the Apostles on this account did forbear giving Rules in such cases, and to oblige Christians to observe them; and that not on the meer Authority of Apostles, but as Governours of Churches, whose business it is to take care of the welfare and preservation of them.*

Anſ. 1. Can the Doctor say, the Apostles made Rules determining their practice, and obliging them to Uniformity in unnecessary and indifferent things? Surely, he hath told us the contrary (Preface to *Iren. p.* 9.) They would lay no other burthen πλὴν τῶν ἐπαναγκες τούτων, *Acts* 15. 28, 29. The things there decreed were necessary either *in se*, or *propter aliud*, in themselves, or by consequence, in some other respect. Though not all of them necessary, *semper & ubique*, perpetually and every where; yet at that time necessary, in regard of the present state of things then. Either necessary to prevent their returning to the Sins of their Gentilism, or to prevent their giving offence to the Jews. Not meerly made necessary by the Decree of that Council, but in some respects necessary antecedently to that Decree, as the Doctor there observes. And let it be remembred, what he says of other things, that *The Holy Ghost never thought them fit to be made matters of Laws, to which all Parties should conform.* Then, can we believe the Apostles would oblige Christians to Uniformity in such things?

2. Much less would they have imposed things unnecessary, that were scrupled too. The Doctor shall never find that. They that would not the weak should be offended by their own, or others practice (as *Rom.* 14. 13, 21. 1 *Cor.* 8. 9, 13.) would not have burthened them with such unnecessary Rules, which they knew, either they could not bear, or must cause them to offend.

3. And it is plain, they had no ſuch power given them. They could not do it lawfully. The Power and Authority given to the Apoſtles, was for Edification, and not for Deſtruction, 2 *Cor.* 10. 8. & 13. 10. *Ad jvvandum, & non ad officiendum; ad utilitatem & commodum, non ad damnum Eccleſiæ.* There is *modus & certus finis hujus poteſtatis.* And I hope, no Church-Governors (now in the World) have more Authority, than the Apoſtles had, that they may go further in their Impoſitions. The Doctor ſays well of *the Governours of the Churches, that their buſineſs is to take care of the welfare and preſervation of them.* And then, how making Rules about unneceſſary things, ſcrupled by many, obliging all to Uniformity therein, and thereby cauſing rents and diviſions in the Society, I ſay, how this can be for the Welfare and Preſervation of it, I am not able to underſtand. The Doctor ſays, *Irenic. p.* 47. 'The leaſt Peg ſcrued up 'too high in the Church, ſoon cauſeth a great deal of Diſcord —— and 'quickly puts Mens Spirits out of tune. And when he telleth us, *p.* 53. 'That in things wholly indifferent in both reſpects, that is, in a thing 'neither commanded nor forbidden by God, nor that hath any appa-'rent reſpect to the Peace and Order of the Church of God, there can 'be (*N.B.*) no rational account given, why the nature of ſuch indiffe-'rencies ſhould be altered by any humane Laws and Conſtitutions. If yet he can give us a rational account, why they may be impoſed, when they apparently tend to diſſention, diſunion, and putting things out of order, I ſhall think he hath a Reach beyond the Moon. If the Church hath power to make ſuch Rules, it is more than he grants to the Magiſtrate, (*ibid. p.* 44, 45.) 'The Magiſtrate hath the power of 'determining things (undetermined by the Word) ſo they be agree-'able to the Word of God. This laſt Clauſe is that which binds (I 'ſuppoſe it ſhould be bounds) the Magiſtrates Power, that it is not ab-'ſolutely Architectonical, becauſe all his Laws muſt be regulated by 'the general Rules of the Divine Law. Would the making of ſuch Rules be found agreeable to the Word of God? What! when they apparently tend not to Peace, but to Breaches, and Diſſentions; not to Order, but to Confuſion? Would ſuch tend to Edification?

And further it may be conſidered, whether this would not be found contrary to ſome of the Doctor's own Rules. *Iren. p.* 63. 'Secondly, 'That nothing be required, nor determined, but what is ſufficiently 'known to be indifferent in its own nature. And *p.* 64. 'That no 'Sanctions be made, nor Mulcts or Penalties be inflicted on ſuch who 'only diſſent from the uſe of ſome things, whoſe lawfulneſs they at 'preſent ſcruple, till ſufficient time and means be uſed for their infor-'mation of the nature and indifference of the things, &c. Obſerve,

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The things themſelves muſt be ſufficiently known to be indifferent. And no Judges ſo fit to decide this Controverſy, as 'the ſenſe of the 'primitive Church in the firſt four Centuries, with the Judgment of 'the reformed Churches, *p.* 63. Or thoſe three Judges, *p.* 62. 'The 'Authority of the Scriptures, the Practice of the primitive Univerſal 'Church, and the tendency of the things to reform mens lives. Now if ſuch care muſt be taken, ſuch means uſed to clear up the indifferency of things, it would ſeem to follow neceſſarily, they may not be impoſed, while they are ſcrupled, and are not by any of the aforeſaid means to be proved indifferent.

P. 12. *The wiſdom of Governours lies in preventing the danger of little things* ——

And ſo I think no leſs in diſpenſing with more minute things, when great evil and danger attends the ſtrict impoſing of them.

Ib.--*And keeping the zeal of well-meaning Perſons within its due bounds.*

It would be known what are thoſe due bounds? Whether it is better to reſtrain zealous well-meaning Perſons from worſhipping God at all together, unleſs they were ſatisfied to conform to the particular by-Rules of Governours; or indeed to ſuffer them peaceably to worſhip the true God in Ordinances of his own appointment, though without following the Governours accidental Rule and mode of worſhip? But more touching that matter afterwards.

P. 12. '*Thoſe who are engaged below in the valley, fighting in ſmall Parties, and purſuing their advantages, do run into their Enemies Camp before they are aware, &c.*

The Doctor knows this is but a popular Argument. Similes may illuſtrate a thing, but prove nothing. But why may not ſuch ſmall Parties do ſome Service, as heartily and reſolvedly bending their little force againſt the common Enemy? And otherwiſe they are like to do none, while the main Body is drawn up within ſuch Banks and Trenches, as rather ſerve to divide and keep off many of its Friends, than to defend it from its Enemies. 'Tis in vain to talk of ſuch retreating into the Body of the Army, while ſuch Canons are planted againſt them, ſuch Rules as cut them off. O that it was ſeriouſly conſidered, whether the ſtrict impoſing of thoſe things, which keep many at a diſtance, and hinder their joining with the Body of the Army (to uſe the Doctor's terms) be indeed of as great conſequence, as the Churches Peace, and the preſervation of Religion it ſelf? Or whether it be wiſdom *perdere ſubſtantiam propter accidentiâ?* And they who ſtand on the higher ground now, ſhould remember, yea, often think of that day, when they ſhall be ſet on level ground with others, and have their cauſe tried

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by the Rule of God's Word. Methinks there should be no harm in wishing, that such would have a tender sense, as to the doing any thing that tends to exclude from the Ministry, and from Church-Communion any whosoever, that are not to be excluded by any Rule laid down in God's Word.

P. 13. *It were extreamly desirable that all good and useful Men should enjoy as much satisfaction as might be,*——

Now thanks to the Doctor for this, if he do not unsay it again.—— *But if it cannot be attained without running greater hazards of unsetling all, it is then to be considered, whether the general safety, or some Mens particular satisfaction be the more desirable.*

Now if he thinks, that to indulge many good and useful Men as to some small matters (if they may be accounted small matters, that have occasioned so great mischiefs; therefore I will say) things not commanded by God, not necessary in themselves, but many ways of very ill consequence, being rigorously injoyned; things not pertaining to the necessary order and decency required in God's Worship, (so as that the want thereof would render it disorderly and undecent) and things that would really burthen or wound the Consciences of many good and useful Men; I say, if the Doctor thinks, that to condescend to such Men in such things as these, would be to run great hazards of unsetling all; then what he says before would seem to be a meer Complement. And then *Quantum mutatus ab illo?* Then he would make such things necessary. Yet *Irenic. p.* 62, 63. He tells us what bounds must be set in the restraint of Christian Liberty. And the first is, 'That 'nothing be imposed as necessary, but what is clearly revealed in the 'Word of God.——*Laqueus est quicquid præcipitur ut necessarium quod liberum esse debet.* And *p.* 64. Distinguishing betwixt things indifferent in their own nature, and indifferent as to their use and practice; Thereupon he says thus, 'And when the generality of those who use 'them, do not use them as indifferent, but as necessary things, it ought 'to be considered whether in this case such a use be allowable, till Men 'be better informed of the things they do. Now if there be such danger of unsetling all, supposing they should be indulged as to the use and practice of such things, then it would seem they are made necessary: but then for that reason, we may question whether the use of them be allowable, till we are better informed. If they be not made necessary, methinks good and useful Men might weigh against things indifferent, or unnecessary, or else sure, they are but of little use.

But what danger there would be of unsetling all, by giving just satisfaction to such Men, I cannot discern. Why might not peaceable, good

good and useful Men, that are dissatisfied as to some by-matters, but agree with them in the Doctrine of Faith, and substance of God's Worship, have liberty to serve their God in the Valleys, and they on the higher ground (as the Doctor's Word is) still possess their Dignities and Benefices? And if moving in an higher Sphere, they are of more use, and diffuse their light farther, no good Men should envy at that.

P. 13. What the Doctor observes from *Acts* 15. 28. I take to be answered before, yea, he hath answered himself. *Irenic.* in Preface *p.* 9. & *p.* 11. 'The same we hope may remain as the most infallible evi-'dence of the Conformity of our Church of *England* to the Primitive, 'not so much in using the same Rites that were in use then, as in not 'imposing them.

P. 14. Where he speaks of the *Judaizing Christians*, if he would have his dissenting Brethren compared with them, the Comparison seems to be unequal. They were for laying the Yoke on others Necks. Poor Dissenters would think themselves well, if others would not endeavour to bring their Necks under the Yoke. These desire to keep close to the Gospel-Rule, the other in their zeal for the Ceremonies of the Law, were in great danger to be removed from the Gospel.

Ibid. *Notwithstanding all their dissatisfaction, the Apostles continued the same Rule.*

Let us enquire what scruples and dissatisfaction the Doctor meaneth. Either it must be, that the Gentile-Believers were dissatisfyed, that they were bound up by that Decree: And then the Answer is, Those things were necessary, as before explained. And if nothing was imposed upon us, but what is alike necessary, then the World might justly blame us for not yeilding to such Impositions. Or it must be that the Judaizing Christians were dissatisfied. And indeed of these the Doctor seems to speak. But then I think, it is against himself. For how were they dissatisfied about the things decreed? Certainly, it was because the Gentile-Believers were left so much at liberty from the observation of the Ceremonies of the Law. But notwithstanding, the Apostles continued the same Rule, because they would lay on them no unnecessary burthen. There was no necessity for imposing Jewish Ceremonies on them; and therefore they would not do it. Those Judaizers thought there was a necessity of Circumcision, and keeping the Law of *Moses*, directly contrary to the Doctrine and Design of the Gospel. The Doctor may say, they scrupled, and were dissatisfied; but plainly they were leavened with such a corrupt Opinion as was by no means to be born with, which would have made Christ and his Death in vain. And therefore there was great necessity for that Decree.

cree. Yea, the Apoſtle thought not that enough, but again and again in his Doctrine ſets himſelf againſt it with might and main, ſhewing the dreadful conſequences of it. If Men will call ſuch groſs errors, directly contrary to Chriſt and the Goſpel, ſcruples; yet ſurely the Doctor cannot but grant, that the ſcruples of good, honeſt, well-meaning Souls about the lawfulneſs of ſome things Men bring into God's Worſhip, without his Warrant, for any thing they can apprehend, are quite of another Nature. And poſſibly the Doctor may have occaſioned ſome of their ſcruples, (and therefore is the more obliged to be favourable towards them) who ſays, *Iren. p.* 36. 'But as for the 'way, manner, and circumſtances of Worſhip, we are to follow the po-'ſitive Laws of God. And *p.* 43, 44. 'Firſt then we ſay not, that the 'Magiſtrate hath a power to revoke, repeal, or alter any Divine po-'ſitive Law, which we have already ſhewn. Secondly, we ſay nor, 'that the Magiſtrate by his own Will may conſtitute what new Laws 'he pleaſes for the Worſhip of God. This was the fault of *Jeroboam*, 'who made *Iſrael* to ſin. Who *p.* 67, 68. diſtinguiſheth betwixt 'Ceremonies, and matter of meer Decency and Order, for order ſake. Saying, 'matters of order and decency are allowable and fitting; but 'Ceremonies, properly taken for Actions ſignificative, their lawfulneſs 'may with better ground be ſcrupled.

Lay theſe things together, and the reſult is this in ſhort, That Apoſtolical Council, *Acts* 15. made a Decree of things neceſſary, that was diſſatisfying to Judaizers, as being croſs to their pernicious Opinions and Practice: Therefore Governors now may decree things unneceſſary, that may with better ground be ſcrupled. But when it is certainly unlawful for private Perſons to put a ſtumbling-block, or an occaſion to fall in their Brethrens way, I would fain know how it comes to be lawful for Rulers and Church-Governours ſo to do.

P. 14. To what the Doctor notes on *Rom.* 14. 3. where he grants a Rule of mutual Forbearance, notwithſtanding that Decree made, *Acts* 15. I cannot apprehend the leaſt inconſiſtency betwixt theſe; as if the one was ſet aſide, where the other took place. And if the Apoſtle acted here 'like a prudent Governour——the Church of *Rome* 'at this time conſiſting moſt of Jews——he perſwades both Parties to 'Forbearance and Charity (for preſerving the Churches Peace, *p.* 15.) Methinks, by a Parity of reaſon, where Non-Conformiſts are more numerous (as in *London*, *&c.*) more Forbearance might be ſhewn, to preſerve the Churches Peace. But indeed we find, that Charity ſhould as well be exerciſed towards a ſingle Brother, 1 *Cor.* 8. 13.

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The Apoſtle (who was a Governour in the Church, and not an ordinary Governour) would not offend a weak Brother. Again, the Doctor ſuppoſeth here, that there were none in the Church of *Rome* that went about to impoſe the neceſſity of keeping the Law of Ceremonies on the Gentile-Chriſtians. But that there were falſe Apoſtles in *Rome* at that time, ſeems to be intimated, *Rom.* 16. 17. [Now I beſeech you, Brethren, mark them which cauſe Diviſions and Offences contrary to the Doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them.] *Notat hic eos*, (ſays *Grotius*) *qui cùm ipſi Judæi non eſſent, vocatis gentibus imponere volebant Legis Moſaicæ jugum, contra & præcepta Chriſti pacem commendantis, & præceptum Apoſtolicum, quod ubiq; Paulus ſervandum docuit. Acts* 16. 4. And the Apoſtle might thus exhort them to mark and avoid ſuch falſe Teachers, and yet in the ſame Epiſtle lay down a Rule of mutual Forbearance, and require them to ſhew Charity towards thoſe who in ſome points had been ſeduced by ſuch falſe Teachers, by which means indeed they might be brought nearer to the Truth, and one to another. As we have it in the Verſe before the Doctor's Text. [*And if ye be in any thing otherwiſe minded, &c.*] As for thoſe that did not yet ſo clearly underſtand the Doctrine of the Goſpel, but did ſtill in part adhere to the aboliſhed Ceremonies of the Law, the Apoſtle would not have them rigorouſly dealt with, but would have them (as *Beza* ſays) *Turbas non moveri & benignè tolerari*, in hopes they might come to have the truth further diſcovered to them. And here it is to be noted, (as Mr. *Corbet* of Church-Unity, *p.* 19. obſerves) There was a greater appearance of Reaſon (then, and in thoſe caſes) for deſpiſing, cenſuring, or offending others, than there can be for ſome Impoſitions now in queſtion among us, *viz.* on the one ſide a fear of partaking in Idolatry, or of eating Meats that God had forbidden, or of neglecting days that God had commanded, as they thought; on the other ſide a fear of being driven from the Chriſtian Liberty, and of reſtoring the Ceremonial Law.

P. 14, 15. *Where the falſe Apoſtles made uſe of this pretence of the Levitical Law being ſtill in force, to divide the Churches, and to ſeparate the Communion of Chriſtians; there the Apoſtle bids them beware of them, and their Practice, &c.*

The Apoſtle had a zeal for Truth, as well as Peace; for the Doctrine of Chriſtianity, as well as for the Communion of Chriſtians. [Mark thoſe which cauſe Diviſions, contrary to the Doctrine—] See *Gal.* 5. 1, 2.

P. 15. To what the Doctor ſays there, I return thus, To argue from an obligation lying upon the beſt Chriſtians to walk by the ſame

Rule (which the Apoſtles laid down) to an obligation to comply with another Rule ſet up, before it be proved agreeable to the Apoſtles Rule, (to uſe the Doctor's Words, *Power of Excom. p.* 14.) 'is a 'ſhortneſs of Diſcourſe, I cannot but wonder at.

P. 16. *I ſhall endeavour to ſearch to the bottom of this dangerous Miſtake, to which we owe ſo much of our preſent Diſtractions and Fears.*

Whether we owe more here to the neceſſary diſſent, and diſtance of thoſe that cannot in Conſcience conſent and comply; or to the Will of thoſe that force them to it, and to thoſe arbitrary Impoſitions which are indeed the Bar to a full Communion, is the Queſtion now, which will at laſt be fully decided at God's Bar. The Doctor once thought our 'Breaches irreparable, without retrenching all exorbitances of 'Power, and reſtoring thoſe Presbyteries which no Law hath forbid-'den, but only through diſuſe have been laid aſide. See the laſt Page of his Preface. And whether are theſe things done? Whether (as he ſays there, *p.* 2.) [*the Church it ſelf be not made a Partition-Wall to divide the Members of it.*]

P. 16. *I ſpeak not of the ſeparation or diſtinct Communion of whole Churches from each other——By whole Churches I mean the Churches of ſuch Nations——*

Yet theſe whole Churches (as the Doctor calls them) are but parts of the Church Catholick. And the Doctor cannot handſomely deny, but the Church Catholick is primarily in God's intention, and particular Churches (whether National, or Parochial) ſecondary and accidental; 'Becauſe of the impoſſibility of all Mens joyning together '(as he ſays) for the convenient diſtribution of Church-Priviledges, 'and adminiſtration of Goſpel-Ordinances. (But otherwiſe) If the 'whole World could joyn together in the publick Worſhip of God, no 'doubt that would be moſt properly a Church. See *Irenic. p.* 154,155. Now obſerve, if the matter ſtands thus, as the Doctor hath ſtated it, then either particular Churches ought not to have different eſtabliſhed Rules for Communion, ſuch as all good Chriſtians cannot lawfully comply with; (for if all could, all have a right to joyn together) or if any National Church (for inſtance) hath ſuch a different eſtabliſhed Rule, therein it is guilty of making a ſeparation from the Catholick Church: but if any Members of it, hold Communion with it ſo far as they can, upon true Catholick Principles, though they cannot comply with the ſaid eſtabliſhed Rule wherein it goes beyond, ſuch cannot be juſtly charged with ſeparation. Here I think, we have gained a great Point.

Or

Or elſe thus, The Doctor hath nothing to ſay againſt the ſeparation or diſtinct Communion of National Churches, though they have their different Rules of Order and Government eſtabliſhed. Here he would not charge the one, or other with the ſin of ſeparation. As he ſays, *Irenic. p.* 65. 'He muſt be a great Stranger in the primitive Church, 'that takes not notice of the great diverſity of Rites and Cuſtoms uſed 'in particular Churches, without any cenſuring thoſe who differed from 'them; or if any by inconſiderate zeal did proceed ſo far, how ill it 'was reſented by other Chriſtians. As *Victor*'s Excommunicating the '*Quarto-decimarii*, for which he is ſo ſharply reproved by *Irenæus*, who 'tells him, that the primitive Chriſtians who differed in ſuch things, 'did not uſe to abſtain from one anothers Communion for them. 'καὶ γαρ, &c. as *Socrates* tells us, Thoſe that agree in the ſame Faith, 'may differ among themſelves in their Rites and Cuſtoms, as he largely 'ſhews in a whole Chapter, &c. And *p.* 66, 67. 'We ſee the primi-'tive Chriſtians did not make ſo much of any Uniformity in Rites and 'Ceremonies; nay I ſcarce think any Churches in the primitive times 'can be produced that did exactly in all things obſerve the ſame Cu-'ſtoms: which might be an argument of moderation in all as to 'theſe things, but eſpecially (*N.B.*) in pretended admirers of the 'primitive Church. And ſo he concludes with that known ſaying of *Auſtin*, *Indignum eſt*, &c. It's an unworthy thing for Chriſtians to condemn and judg one another for thoſe things which do not further us at all in our way to Heaven (as the Doctor;) or, which cannot render us more worthy, or unworthy to God. Now *hoc ſuppoſito*, and indeed it is undeniable, it will follow, I ſay, it will follow, If Rulers do but once ſay, That Miniſter and Congregation that agree with the true Catholick Church in the ſame Faith, though they differ as to ſome Mode or Rites not neceſſary, (which their Conſciences are not ſatisfied in) are not guilty of the ſin of Separation. And then what a charitable Word would that be? And ſo if I was with the Doctor now, I would be ſo bold to ask him, How he, and others of his way, that look upon the ſin of Separation as ſo heinous, (as I think ſome would make it inconſiſtent with a ſtate of Salvation) can poſſibly ſatisfy themſelves that they are not acceſſary to the ſame, not having endeavoured to the uttermoſt, to perſwade Rulers to ſpeak that good Word, which would have prevented the ſin and danger of ſo many Souls? Would they be thought ſuch as are wholly ſwayed by a private intereſt, and ſo uncharitable, that they care not what becomes of others Souls, and ſo careleſs of the Peace and Unity of Chriſtians, which they cannot but ſay, is a Duty incumbent upon all, ſo far as poſſibly

they can, to promote? This I look upon, as a very healing Principle, (I wiſh it was more taught and improved,) That Chriſtians may be looked upon as of the ſame Communion, agreeing in the ſame Faith, and all that is neceſſary, though they vary ſomething as to ſome Mode, and Rites not neceſſary. Particular National Churches may differ, as to theſe, without a Breach of Communion, and of the Peace of the Church; and why not ſome particular Congregations, within a National Church, if Men would? I ſhould think, it muſt needs be a very prepoſterous Courſe to prefer the meer accidentals of Religion and God's Worſhip, before the ſubſtantial parts of the ſame, or but to make them equal, as they are at leaſt made equal, if we muſt not have the one without the other.

P. 17. Here I agree with the Doctor, that the notion of a Church does not barely relate to Acts of Worſhip. And yet when he ſays, *If this held true, the Church muſt be diſſolved aſſoon as the Congregation is broken up.*

Perhaps ſome may be ready to argue *ad hominem*, and put him in mind of his own Words (before cited) *If the whole World could joyn together in the publick Worſhip of God, no doubt it would be moſt properly a Church.* Yet would not the Doctor ſay, the Church was diſſolved as ſoon as ſuch Worſhip was ended.

P. 17, 18. *And if there be one Catholick Church, conſiſting of multitudes of particular Churches conſenting in one Faith; then why may there not be one National Church from the conſent in the ſame Articles of Religion, and the ſame Rules of Government and Order of Worſhip?*

Anſ. 1. The Doctor will grant, a Catholick Church ſubſiſts by a Divine Law, and poſitive Inſtitution of Chriſt. And if he can ſay, and prove it, that the National Church of *England*, as it is now eſtabliſhed, ſo ſubſiſts, his diſſenting Brethren will thank him for it. They could never yet find *Epiſcopi Epiſcoporum*, Lay-Chancellors, &c. Ordinary Officers in the Church by the poſitive Inſtitution of Chriſt. Now he tells us (*Power of Excom. p.* 6.) 'That the Exerciſe and Adminiſtration of this Power belongs to the ſpecial Officers and Governours of the Church, none elſe being capable of exerciſing this Power 'of the Church, as ſuch, but they on whom it is ſetled (*N. B.*) by the 'Founder of the Church it ſelf. And *p.* 13. 'I here ſuppoſe that Chriſt 'hath by a poſitive Law eſtabliſhed the Government of his Church upon Officers of his own appointment, which I have largely proved elſewhere (*Iren. par.* 2. *c.* 2.) Now lay this together with what he ſaith (*Power of Excom. p.* 17.) having occaſion to cite 1 *Tim.* 5. 17. 'I intend not to prove an office of Rulers diſtinct from Teachers from 'hence,

'hence, which I know neither this place nor any other will do: And I doubt it will follow that no Lay-Persons can of Right have Power of Government in the Church, and that the present Constitution is not by the positive Law of Christ.

2. I shall not deny a National Church from consent in the same Articles of Religion, and Rules of Government, and Order of Worship. Such a Church there may be: but then it must be noted, such Articles and Rules ought to be agreeable to the established Rule of the Holy Scriptures. And for any Church to make such things terms of Agreement and Communion, which are not agreeable to that same Rule by which all Christians ought to walk, some tell us it is a schismatical Practice. And so it may happen, that they that so far separate from such a dividing National Church, though they comply not with its established Rule, may yet be found walking by the same Rule, in the true sense of the Doctor's Text. And whether indeed it be agreeable to Scripture Rule, to set down such terms of Communion, as would exclude any, that have a right to Communion, let it be examined. See *Iren. p.* 122. 'Certainly the primitive Church, that did not charge 'Mens Faith with such a load of Articles, as now in these latter Ages 'Men are charged with, would much less burthen Men, with impo-'sing doubtful Practices upon them, as the ground of Church-Commu-'nion. Yea, but what if Junior-Churches think themselves wiser than the Primitive Church in these matters? See *p.* 119, 120. 'Let 'Men turn and wind themselves which way they will, by the very 'same Arguments that any will prove Separation from the Church of '*Rome* lawful, because she required unlawful things, as conditions of 'her Communion, it will be proved lawful (*N.B.*) not to conform 'to any suspected or unlawful practice required by any Church Gover-'nour upon the same terms, if the thing so required, be after serious 'and sober enquiry, judged unwarrantable by a Man's own Consci-'ence. And withal it would be further considered, whether when 'our best Writers do lay the imputation of Schism, not on those who 'withdraw Communion, but on them for requiring such conditions 'of Communion (whereby they did rather eject Men out of their 'Communion, than the others separate from them.) So then it is not separation, if Men are ejected by others putting such conditions: 'they do not by the same Arguments, lay the imputation of Schism 'on all who require such conditions of Communion, and take it whol-'ly off from those who refuse to conform for Conscience-sake. Where-unto he subjoyns the judgment of Mr. *Hales*, in his excellent (though little) Tract (as he says) concerning Schism. He speaking of the

Schism

Schiſm about Image-Worſhip, determined by the ſecond Council of *Nice*, ſays, In this the Schiſmatical Party was the Synod it ſelf (whom a little before he calls that Rout) and ſuch as conſpired with it. For concerning the uſe of Images in *Sacris*, Firſt it is acknowledged by all, That it is not a thing neceſſary; Secondly, It is by moſt ſuſpected; Thirdly, It is by many held utterly unlawful. Can then the enjoyning of the practice of ſuch a thing (ſays he) be ought elſe but abuſe? Or can the refuſal of Communion here, be thought any other thing than Duty? Thus the learned *Hales*, (lately reprinted with *Miſcellan. p.* 211.) ſo then if there may be a National Church from conſent in the ſame Articles of Religion, Rules of Government, Order of Worſhip, it ſeems theſe ſhould be clear from ſuſpected and unlawful things, that it incur not the cenſure of a Schiſmatical Church.

P. 19. *I do not intend to ſpeak of the Terms upon which Perſons are to be admitted among us to the exerciſe of the Function of the Miniſtry, but of the Terms of Lay-Communion.*

I confeſs, Sir, theſe are not to be confounded. You know my mind, by what I wrote about 17 years ſince, and at leaſt have heard, what has been my practice. I could be ſatisfied to join in that Worſhip, wherein I could not officiate as a Miniſter. You have had my Reaſons heretofore. But I conceive the matter which the Doctor drives at in this Sermon, cannot be fully decided without a due conſideration of the caſe of the ejected Miniſters, which you ſee me led to towards the end of theſe Papers.

P. 20. *In the judgment of ſome of the moſt impartial Men of the Diſſenters at this day, although they think the caſe of the Miniſters very hard on the Account of Subſcriptions and Declarations required of them; yet they confeſs very little is to be ſaid on the behalf of the People, from whom none of thoſe things are required. So that the People are condemned in their Separation, by their own Teachers.*

Anſ. And would not the Doctor himſelf have thought it an hard caſe with Miniſters heretofore? See *Irenic. p.* 64. 'I am ſure it is 'contrary to the primitive Practice, and the Moderation then uſed, to 'ſuſpend or deprive Men of their Miniſterial Function for not conforming in Habits, Geſtures or the like. Was he ſure of it, when he wrote this, and can he be ſure of the contrary now? Or would the primitive Church by no means have ſuſpended or degraded Miniſters for not comforming in an Habit, or Geſture; did the Primitive Church 'never think it worth the while to make any ſtanding Laws for Rites and 'Cuſtoms that had no other original but Tradition, (as in Preface to *Iren. p.* 10.) and yet would it have been thought worth the while then

to

to have impoſed a great deal more than the uſe of an Habit, Geſture, or old Cuſtom, things the lawfulneſs whereof might have been much more ſuſpected, and then ſuſpend and degrade thoſe, that would not ſubmit unto them? Surely, we ſhould have better thoughts than ſo of the Primitive Church.

One thing had almoſt eſcaped me, (beginning of *p.* 20.) *I will not ſay, there hath been a great deal of Art uſed to confound theſe two, (and it is eaſy to diſcern to what purpoſe it is.)* But thus the Doctor in effect ſays, what he ſays, I will not ſay, there hath been a great deal of Art uſed—As if being crafty we caught People with guile, I hope it is not ſo. As for my ſelf, many know what my Principle and Practice hath been. I have never uſed any Art to draw off any from attending on the Miniſtry of the legal publick Preachers. At my firſt turning out I did ſeriouſly bend my Studies, to ſatisfy my ſelf and others of the lawfulneſs of joyning ſtill with the publick Congregations, and thereupon I wrote on that Subject, and was willing my Papers ſhould go into the hands of any that deſired them, not only Conformiſts, but thoſe of the Congregational Perſwaſion too, beſides diverſe others. When the King's Licences came forth, I having opportunity (at that time in a Journey) to ſee and converſe with diverſe Miniſters in my Predicament, made it my Buſineſs where I came to perſwade to ſuch an uſe of that Liberty, as might give leaſt offence to our Conforming Brethren. And ſtill to this day, I would ſo time my work, as not to hinder others of any benefit they might get under their Miniſtration. And I think I may ſay, the greateſt part of thoſe that go under the Name of Diſſenters, or Non-Conformiſts, are of the ſame Mind, and do practiſe accordingly. I know many Miniſters in one little Town (if we may call ſuch a number as four, a many) not one of whom would be employed there, while the legal publick Preacher is officiating, but would rather chooſe to hear him. How many of us that have been almoſt 18 years out of Place, that can appeal to God, the ſearcher of all Hearts, we have not uſed any Art to take People off from publick Miniſters by Law allowed, if they had any tolerable fitneſs for Miniſterial Work. No, rather we wiſh, and ſhould be heartily glad (I hope) to ſee them more ſerviceable, more ſucceſsful, than ever we have been. Truly, I am more pierced with ſuch an uncharitable Inſinuation of the Doctors, then with the dint of any of his Arguments.

Yet I muſt confeſs we are not all of a mind. Some do not think it lawful to join with them. Now ſuppoſe them to be in an error, yet I queſtion whether it would not be uncharitable to ſay, They uſe a great deal of Art——and it is eaſy to diſcern to what purpoſe it is. What they

they do, or do not, under those apprehensions they have at present, is in the simplicity of their hearts. Possibly, another method than hath been taken, might reconcile them to that Church-Communion, which at present they dare not own.

P. 20. *But how they can preach lawfully to a People, who commit a fault in hearing them, I do not understand.*

I hope, it will be found neither unlawful for them to preach (being true Ministers still) nor unlawful for others to hear them. But I am not come to that yet. At present I say but this, The Doctor no doubt knows, he hath divers that come out of other Parishes ordinarily to hear him, which is a thing contrary to his established Rule. Then do they not in his judgment commit a fault in hearing him? Then how does he satisfy himself that he can preach lawfully to them? I am *sumus ergo pares*. Now may not he and his Dissenting Brethren shake hands? If they are not warning their Hearers in every Sermon to take heed of the Principles, and Sin of Separation, is the Doctor in every Sermon he preaches warning the People to take heed of leaving their Parish-Church, and charging any that belong to another Parish to depart?

'P. 20. *I do not confound bare suspending Communion in some particular Rites, which Persons do modestly scruple, and using it in what they judge to be lawful; with either total or at least ordinary forbearance of Communion in what they judg to be lawful; and proceeding to the forming of separate Congregations*, i. e. *under other Teachers, and by other Rules than what the established Religion allows. And this is the present case of Separation which I intend to consider, and to make the sinfulness and mischief of it appear.*

Bona verba, quæso. Here is the stating of the case the Doctor hath determined in his Sermon.

Here 1. I observe, the Doctor seems to allow a partial Separation. That is, 'a **bare** suspending Communion in some particular Rites, 'which Persons do modestly scruple, while they use it in what they judg lawful. For which (because he says so little here) See *Iren. p.* 117, 118. 'withdrawing Communion from a Church in unlawful or 'suspected things, doth not lay Men under the guilt of Schism. Which 'because he knew it might meet with opposition from those Men, who 'will sooner call Men Schismaticks than prove them so, he there offers 'reason for it. Now some modestly scruple a particular Rite, and Communion in the Liturgy, as being imposed: but what the Doctor will say to that I know not; though this I know, he hath said something that would seem to favour them And his so much commended *Hales* says, 'Wheresoever false or suspected Opinions are made a piece

of

of the Church Liturgy, he that ſeparates is not the Schiſmatick. *Miſcellan. p.* 218.

2. Methinks, thoſe Diſſenters (as they are called) that do ordinarily hold Communion with them in God's Worſhip, ſo far as it is his Worſhip, ſhould not fall under the Doctors laſh here; though they have other occaſional Meetings beſides.

3. A total forbearance of Communion with them, I confeſs, has a deep ſound. As if one would not have Communion with them at all, though never ſo fair an opportunity offered it ſelf. I would hope the far greateſt part of the publick Congregations in *England* may ſtill be looked upon as parts of Chriſt's viſible Church, that have the ſubſtantials of God's Worſhip, ſuch as at leaſt upon occaſion Chriſtians might lawfully join in. But if there be an ordinary forbearance, it is much what the ſame, as if it was total, with the Doctor. And yet indeed till more forbearance and condeſcenſion is ſhewn, or better ſatisfaction given than I can find in this Sermon before me, I muſt forbear paſſing ſo ſevere a cenſure in the caſe, as I ſee others do. Yea, ſome whom I hope to meet in the General Aſſembly at laſt, that would refuſe to hear me for that very cauſe the Doctor ſpeaks of ſometimes, that I own many Parochial Churches to be true Churches; yet could I be ſatisfied upon occaſion, to join with them, having one that I could look upon as called and ſeparated to the work of the Miniſtry among them. Though ſome would count me a Fanatick for it, yet I hope I am a Catholick.

4. The Doctor takes in a *proceeding to the forming of ſeparate Congregations*, i. e. *under other Teachers, and by other Rules than what the eſtabliſhed Religion allows.*

Now 1. I would not underſtand the Doctor ſo, as if he was for a compliance with any Religion that is uppermoſt, whatever it be, true or falſe. I do not look upon him as ſuch a Latitudinarian, that would plead for Mr. *Hobs* his publick Conſcience [of whom the report goes, that when ſome ſerious counſel was given him concerning his Soul, and his everlaſting State a little before his Death, he ſware. 'If I was 'at Heaven, what a fall ſhould I have? As if he would have the World know, he lived and died an Atheiſt. *Qualis vita, finis ita.*] But I ſhould do the Reverend Doctor a man feſt wrong, if after all he has written againſt the Papiſts, and for the juſtifying of our ſeparation from *Rome*, I did ſuppoſe, that he would not be for ſeparation in this caſe, ſhould the *Romiſh* Religion ever come to be eſtabliſhed. He knows when under *Arrian* Biſhops, 'many both of the Clergy and People, 'who reſolved to adhere to the true Faith, withdrew from the pub-

'lick Meetings, and had private Aſſemblies of their own, *Iren.p* 115. As he very well knows what the renowned *Hales* hath written, *p.*230, 231. 'In times of manifeſt corruptions and perſecutions, wherein Re-'ligious aſſembling is dangerous, private Meetings, howſoever beſides 'publick Order, are not only lawful, but they are of Neceſſity and 'Duty——All pious Aſſemblies (in ſuch times) are indeed, or rather 'alone the lawful Congregations; and publick Aſſemblies, though ac-'cording to form of Law, are indeed nothing elſe but Riots and Con-'venticles, if they be ſtained with corruption and ſuperſtition. So he.

Sure the Doctor cannot think, as Mr. *Hobs*, that any Aſſembly, forbidden by the Civil Sovereign to aſſemble, is an unlawful Aſſembly, that without his Authority a Church ought not to aſſemble.

2. Therefore the Doctor muſt be underſtood of forming Congregations under other Teachers, and by other Rules than what the true Religion eſtabliſhed allows——.

Now if this be the ſtate of the caſe; 1. Thoſe Congregations the Doctor aims at, are of the ſame Religion. I hope the Doctor is not got ſo high as to place Religion in thoſe things wherein Parochial Congregations differ from them, to make the things neceſſary.

2. They doubt not but it is eaſy to prove, they have true Miniſters, ſuch Teachers as the Word of God, the certain Rule of Religion, allows.

3. And that they have divine Ordinances diſpenſed, and no other Worſhip of God than the Word of God allows. Yea, I ſee an able Lawyer, in his Advice to a Juſtice of Peace, *p.* 5. concluding, that it cannot be proved other Worſhip than the eſtabliſhed Religion (or the Liturgy and Practice of the Church of *England*) allows.

4. And may it not be a Queſtion, whether they can properly be ſaid to erect new Churches, or to proceed to the forming of ſeparate Congregations, who were true Miniſters, and had their Congregations before others came into their places? If they had done nothing worthy of ejection, or excluſion from their Miniſtry, whether they have not ſtill a right to exerciſe their Function? And conſequently, whether others may not as juſtly be ſaid to draw away their People from them, as they are charged with the ſame Practice?

5. And whether if any Rules are eſtabliſhed to bar ſuch Miniſters as God hath allowed, and tending to deprive multitudes of Chriſtians of the benefit of his publick Worſhip, and Ordinances of his own appointment, whether ſuch Rules can be ſtrictly binding, or whether they are not an encroachment upon the Authority of God and Jeſus Chriſt?

6. And let it be conſidered, whether if the poor Proteſtants now under the Power of *France*, who are deprived of their Temples, and

places

places of publick Worſhip, ſhould flee into *England* for the free exerciſe of their Religion here, whether I ſay, they ſhould be obliged in all things to ſubmit to the Eſtabliſhed Rule and Order among us, or elſe be held guilty of a ſinful and miſchievous courſe of Separation, not to be tolerated and endured?

7. If Forreigners ſhould be allowed a liberty of aſſembling for the Worſhip of God, without being ſtrictly bound up to the preſent Rule eſtabliſhed (in all things); or cenſured and taken for Separatiſts, why might not the ſober, peaceable Chriſtians among us be allowed the ſame liberty, without being laid under that charge and cenſure? Shall the *Church* of *England* think, that all her Charity and forberance is owing to ſtrangers, that ſhe ſhould ſhow none to thoſe, who are in ſome reſpect nearer to her?

8. Whether it will not be ſaid the eſtabliſhed Religion is the ſame now, it was in King *Edward* the ſixth's days, when a Rubrick left it to the diſcretion of the Miniſter, what and how much to read, when there was a Sermon?

9. Whether there are not ſome publick places, that are not very well ſatisfied with what they have done, and come not up (in every punctilio) to the eſtabliſh'd Rule? As ſome read not all the Common Prayer they are enjoyned; ſome uſe not the Surplice; Some omit the Croſs in Baptiſm; ſome dare not put away any from the Sacrament meerly becauſe they are not ſatisfied to receive it kneeling. Now are ſuch to be accounted ſeparate Congregations (in the Doctor's ſence?) If it be ſaid, Though they vary a little from the eſtabliſh'd Rule, yet they keep to their *Pariſh-Churches*, and have Preachers Epiſcopally ordained, and publickly allowed.

Anſ. 1. The Aſſembly, not the place, makes a Chriſtian Congregation. And ſuch Congregations were before Pariſhes were known in the world. The diſtribution into Pariſhes was only accidental, convenient but not of neceſſity. The Doctor ſayes, (*Ser. p.* 28.) 'After ſometime (but not till after ſome time) in the greater Cities they 'had diſtinct Places allotted, and Presbyters fixed among them; 'and ſuch Allotments were called Titles at *Rome*, and *Lauræ* at '*Alexandria*, and Pariſhes in other places. And how Common is it in *London* for men to go Ordinarily to other Churches and Miniſters? Now will it be ſaid, that ſuch (leaving their own Pariſh-Church) make the Congregations with whom they joyn, Separate Congregations? Beſides, there ſhould be no difference here, if it might be as the Non-Conformiſt's would have it, they would be for preaching in Pariſh-Churches to chuſe, if they might.

2. If the most of them were Ordained by Presbyters, yet that invalidates not their Ordination. *Iren.* p. 379. 'After Episcopal Government 'was settled in the *Church*, yet Ordination by Presbyters was looked 'on as valid. And *p.* 381. Bishop *Bancroft* himself (as is to be seen in *Spotswood*) would not have it called in question. An Acquaintance of mine being upbraided with it, that he was ordained by none but a company of Presbyters, quickly returned thus; You were ordained by a Bishop, I was Ordained by many Bishops together, and such Bishops as may be proved Scripture Bishops. But there are some ancient Men, yea, some that are younger too, who had Episcopal Ordination. And may it yet be said of these, that they are other Teachers, then the Established Religion allows?

3. If they are not allowed, that is the thing in question, whether Men have power to forbid them to preach, and exercise the office of the Ministry, who have been duly called, and set apart to it, and have not deserved degrading from it?

10. If Men have power to establish Rules; excluding from the Ministry thousands, not to be excluded by any Rules laid down in God's Word, whether the Church be not left in a Woful case, who by such means may be deprived of all, or the greatest and soundest part of her Ministers, and consequently of God, Ordinances at mens pleasure? When about 2000 Ministers are supposed to have been turned out together, what if all the Ministers in place had been of the same Judgment, not satisfied of the lawfulness of their submitting to the Established Rule, if thereupon they must all have laid down their Ministry, then how sad a state had Multitudes of Christian Congregations been left in, even as Sheep having no Shepherd? Can we think that *Christ* has left his Church at such miserable uncertainties, at such a loss, that she should have no Ministers, if Rulers say at one time, there shall be no Ministers but such as declare their assent and consent to such forms, and modes of Worship to another Book besides the *Bible*, and all things contained in it? and at another time, None shall be Ministers, but such as declare their assent and consent to the utter abolishing of all forms? If thousands of his Ministers shall becut off with a Rule for Conformity on the one hand, and as many cut off with a Rule against it on the other hand?

5. Take notice here what the Doctor sayes else where, so he would have 'no penalty inflicted, till it may be seen whether they disobey 'out of wilful contempt and obstinacy of spirit, not only out of weak-'ness of Conscience and Dissatisfaction concerning the things them-'selves. And if it be made evident to be out of contempt, yet that

'only

'only ſuch penalties be inflicted as anſwer to the nature of the 'offence, *Iren. p.* 64. And *p.* 42. As for the derivation of the power 'and authority of the Function (of the Miniſtry) that is from Chriſt. 'But for the Adminſtration of the Function, two things belong to 'the Magiſtrate: Firſt, to provide and take care for due Adminiſtration 'of it; and to ſee that Miniſters preach the true Doctrine, though 'he cannot lawfully forbid the true Doctrine to be taught; and that they 'duely adminiſter the Sacraments, though he cannot command them 'to adminiſter them otherwiſe then Chriſt hath delivered them down 'to us. Secondly, in caſe of male-Adminiſtration of his Function, 'or Scandal, rendring him unfit for it, it is in a Magiſtrate's power, if 'not formally to depoſe, yet to deprive them of the liberty of ever 'exerciſing their function within his Dominions. But I conceive, the Doctor will be hard put to it, to prove the ejected Miniſters guilty of ſuch male-Adminiſtration, or Scandal, for which the Magiſtrate might juſtly deny them the liberty of exerciſing their Function within his Dominions. If it be within the Magiſtrat's power to forbid Miniſters Preaching true Doctrine, and duly adminiſtring Sacraments, without any cauſe rendring them unfit, the contequence would be very ſad, as was ſhewed before: if it be not within their power, then ſuch may go on in the exerciſe of their Miniſtry notwithſtanding Mens command to the contrary. And if ſuch are not diveſted of their office, they have authority to exerciſe it ſtill, as they ſhall have opportunity. As the Doctor (in his ſeveral Conferences, *p.* 122.) tells us, He 'could not imagine that any Perſons would 'ſuppoſe the Chriſtian Church would allow a validity of Orders, 'without lawful Authority to uſe and exerciſe thoſe Orders. And *p.* 123. Can any Man be ſo ſenſleſs to think —(And *p.* 132.) 'the 'Church never allowed one, but it allowed the other alſo? If you ſhould reply, that the Doctor. (*p.* 140.) ſuppoſeth, it may be actually taken away by the cenſures of the Church. My Anſwer is, Yet I hope the Doctor will not ſay, that the Church hath an unlimited power here, that ſhe may ſuſpend, degrade, and depoſe whom ſhe pleaſeth; but that ſhe muſt have juſt ground for proceeding to ſuch a cenſure. He that before boundeth the Magiſtrates power (as we ſee before) would not have the Churches power left unbounded. If the Church hath power to cenſure, ſuſpend, and depoſe the bad, for Scandal, Hereſy, Idolatry, it will not follow, that ſhe hath the like power to ſuſpend and depoſe the good too (when ſhe pleaſeth) for non-compliance in things ſuſpected, if not unlawful. This would be a power for Deſtruction, not for Edification. A power to Act

against the Truth, not for the Truth: Such a Power as the Apostles would never claim, or exercise.

11. Then what if they be found such Teachers, and to worship God in such a way, as true Religion doth allow? What if an human Constitution established, allow not of those, who are allowed of by God in his Word?

12. Let it be considered, whether if true Ministers of Christ are cast out by such Rules as are not warranted by the Word they are not thereby necessitated to have distinct Congregations or to lay aside their Ministry, which may not be lawful for them to do? I would do the Doctor no wrong, but acknowledg, he distinguisheth betwixt Non-Communion in unlawful, or suspected Rites or Practices in a Church, and entring into distinct Societies for Worship. Now mark what he says, *Irenic. p.* 123, 124. 'This I do not assert to be therefore lawful, 'because some things are required which Mens Consciences are unsatis-'fied in: Unless (*N. B.*) others proceed to eject and cast them wholly 'out of Communion on that account, in which case their separation is 'necessary. —Here if I can understand the Doctor, he grants Separation necessary, entring into a new and distinct Society for God's Worship unavoidable, when Christians are wrongfully cast out for not conforming to a Church in unlawful or suspected Practices. And I can find nothing in his Conferences (*p.* 170. or elsewhere) to take off or retract this Concession. From whence by a Parity of Reason, I think, it will follow, that when Ministers are wrongfully ejected, and cast out of their publick Ministerial Station for not conforming in unlawful or suspected Practices, their having distinct Assemblies becomes necessary, at least, if there be any need of their Ministry. And whether this be not the present case, I would leave it to indifferent, unprejudiced Minds to judg. When also the Canon *ipso facto* excommunicateth all Lay and Clergy who say they take Conformity to be Sin.

Now I proceed on with the Doctor.

P. 21. *But that I may do it more convincingly, I will not make the difference wider than it is.*

This I like well, as tending to Peace and Union. And it is his Advice to his Dissenting Brethren (*Serm. p.* 56.) *Not to inflame the Peoples heats, by making their differences with the Church of* England *to appear greater than they are.* Now I heartily wish, he may follow his own Rule. Surely, we agree in far more and greater matters, than we differ in. We are one with the Church of *England* in all the necessary points of Faith and Christian Practice. We are one with the Church of *England*, as to the substance, and all necessary parts of God's Worship.

ſhip. But we differ as to certain accidental Forms, and Modes, and Rites, which the Church of *England* cannot ſay are neceſſary, and appear to us as things at leaſt to be ſuſpected, and yet they are obtruded and impoſed with as much rigor and ſtrictneſs, as if they were moſt highly neceſſary.

P. 21. *They generally yield, that our Parochial Churches are true Churches.*

Anſ. They cannot yeild that all Pariſh Churches are true Churches; or every Pariſh-Prieſt a true Miniſter. Are there none in place ſo lamentably ignorant, ſo wofully idle, ſo looſe and groſly profane, that the Doctor would be aſhamed to own, as Perſons fit to be truſted with the diſpenſation of God's Holy Ordinances, and with the care of precious Souls? Now will the Doctor allow them to have private Aſſemblies in ſuch places, under ſound Teachers, where otherwiſe their Souls are in danger to periſh for lack of knowledg?

Ibid. *They do not deny that we have all the Eſſentials of true Churches, true Doctrine, true Sacraments, and an implicite Covenant between Paſtors and People.*

They will not grant ſo much of all Pariſh-Churches. Are there none in place unable to teach, that know not ſound Doctrine? Are there none that teach corrupt Doctrine? If there be but one, or never ſo few blind Guides; if but one Heretick, Socinian, &c. or never ſo few of them; they are too many. But I doubt it may not be ſaid, there are none ſuch, no, not one. And are there none brought in quite againſt the Peoples conſent? and is there yet an implicite Covenant betwixt ſuch and the People?

2. It may ſo happen, that Churches which have all the Eſſentials of true Churches, may ſet down ſuch terms of Communion, as ſome cannot ſubmit to without Sin. In which caſe it may be no Sin, to ſeparate from true Churches. Non-Communion is no Sin, where one cannot have Communion without Sin.

P. 22. *Who could have imagined otherwiſe than that —— they ſhould have joined with us in what themſelves judged to be lawful, and in many caſes a Duty?*

What they judg to be lawful, and in many caſes a Duty, will not prove it a neceſſary Duty at all times, and out of thoſe caſes which make it ſo.

Ibid. *Scarce any of their Preachers —— come ordinarily ——*

If Preachers come not ordinarily to the publick Congregations to hear, ſuppoſing they have a warrantable Call to preach unto others; there is this to be ſaid for it, which the Doctor hath, (*p.* 31.) *That*

which

which may be a duty in one caſe, when it comes to thwart a greater Duty, may be none.

Ibid. *And this is that which at preſent we lament, as a thing which unavoidably tends to our common ruine, if not in time prevented.*

It ſeems if ruine comes upon us, thoſe ſeparate Congregations he ſpeaks of, muſt have it laid at their Doors. But if we were convinced, that 'the Union of the Church lies more in the Unity of Faith and 'Affection, then in Uniformity of doubtful Rites and Ceremonies (as the Doctor hath the expreſſion *Irenic. p.* 121, 122.) and ſo could learn to exerciſe more Charity and mutual Forbearance towards each other, and no more bite and devour one another, both might be preſerved in Peace, and our common ruine prevented. Whether the tolerating of Religious Aſſemblies, that differ not from the ſtated publick Congregations in any thing that is neceſſary to Salvation, or eſſential to a Chriſtian Congregation, when both may be looked upon as Chriſtian Aſſemblies, when God is truly worſhipped in both or the ſuppreſſing of them that differ only in ſome Mode of Worſhip, & Rites not neceſſary, tendeth more to the ruine of Religion, ſeemeth not hard for ſuch as are unbiaſſed to determine. Hath nothing been done in thoſe more private Aſſemblies to ſecure and promote the true Intereſt of Religion? Hath nothing been done there to prevent Peoples running into dangerous Errors? Might we not have had greater Flocks of Quakers, *&c.* had not many been ſtayed in thoſe Aſſembles? Have not Quakers, Anabaptiſts, *&c.* encreaſed moſt, when theſe Aſſemblies have been moſt diſturbed, when Men have been moſt zealous to diſperſe and ſuppreſs them? Hath nothing been done there to prevent the Growth of Popery? See the Morning Lectures againſt Popery. As the ejecting of ſo many ſound Teachers and thruſting them out of their Pulpits did; ſo no doubt the hunting them out of their Corners would very much pleaſe, gratify and encourage the common Enemy. If the Doctor thinks, it was better that none of that Worſhip was performed to God, and that Souls had none of thoſe means and helps there, than that they ſhould not have all juſt according to the Liturgy of the Church of *England*, this is a thing I would lament. On the other hand, it ſeems a little ſtrange to me, how they do ſeriouſly lament our diviſions, who are yet for keeping up the Wall of Partition betwixt them and us. What could we do in compariſon of them? We cannot for our Lives ſubmit to ſome things required. It ſhould not be expected from us, unleſs they would have us lie and diſſemble with God and Man: but if indeed they would have us one with them, they may plead hard, that no unneceſſary burthen ſhould be laid on us, which we cannot

not in conſcience ſubmit to, the ſtrict impoſition whereof is never likely to do any good, but muſt ſtill keep up the unhappy differences among us. As the Con-Non and Non-Con ſayes, I am well ſatisfied that the Church will never enjoy Catholick peace but upon Catholick terms, which the terms of Conformity are not.

Yet let not our Hearts be alienated from thoſe with whom we muſt profeſs to agree in the main; no, not though (through ſome ſtrange prejudice) their Hearts ſeem hardned againſt us. Poſſibly, they might ſome time paſt have done much to take away the cauſe of our differences: but theſe differences muſt continue, and our common Enemy takes advantage at them; as it ought not, ſo I hope it ſhall not prejudice our minds againſt our Religion, about which we differ not (the difference being but about certain unneceſſary Additaments to it;) And they that boaſt ſo much of their unity, have (we know) as great differences among themſelves. As about that great point of the Churches Infallibility (the very Corner-ſtone in their Fabrick, which ſhould hold all together) they are not yet agreed where to place it.

P. 23. *But you may aſk, What then are the grounds of the preſent Separation: ——That conſcientious Men can in ſuch a juncture of affairs perſiſt in ſo obſtinate and eſtructive da courſe of Separation?*

Here are hard words indeed, that once I ſhould not have thought would ever have dropt from the Doctor's mouth or pen. But *Tempora Mutantur* ——How juſtly it is called Separation (in the bad ſence of the word) and whether it deſerves thoſe Epithetes the Doctor hath beſtowed on it in this Sermon, as ſinful, Miſchievous, Wilful, Obſtinate, Deſtructive Separation, is to be conſidered. As the Doctor (in *Iren. p.* 146.) grants, there was a leſſer, and an higher ſort of, or greater Excommunication; ſo methinks if he would needs have it Separation, yet there was no neceſſity for him to aggravate it, as if there was no difference betwixt a neceſſitated, and wilful, obſtinate Separation. There may be a ſinful Separation, that is not to be called wilful, obſtinate Separation. Much leſs doth that which is neceſſitated, deſerve to be ſo called. The Doctor hath told us, (*Iren. p.* 108.) that we muſt not 'Judg every thing to deſerve the name, which is by 'many called Schiſm. That term being (as the Learned *Hales* ſayes) 'but a Theological ſcar-crow, as it is commonly uſed. 'Schiſm then '(ſayes the Doctor) as it imports a Separation from Communion with a Church-Society, is not a thing intrinſecally and formally evil 'in it ſelf; but it is capable of the differences of good and evil ac-'cording to the grounds, reaſons, ends, and Circumſtances inducing

to such a Separation. The withdrawing from Society is but the materiality of Schism; the formality of it must be fetched from the grounds on which it is built.

Now to the grounds on which these distinct Societies are built. 1. They are not the same with those on which the Separatists heretofore went. The Separatists held the publick Congregations to be *Babylonish Synagogues*. The Church of *England* was *Sodom* and *Egypt* to them, an Whorish and Idolatrous, no true Church. They held our Ministers to be Antichristian, both their Entrance into, and exercise of their function Antichristian. They held that set-forms of Prayer were Abominable in God's sight. They held there was no truly constituted Church upon earth but themselves, and those that might be found of their way, (Wherein they were like the Donatists.) On such grounds as these they separated, which the present Non-conformists do not hold. Now if the formality of Schism, or Separation must be fetch'd from the grounds of it, then does not the Doctor forget himself (*Ser. p.* 33.) saying, *Do they not do the very same things, and in the same manner, that the others do? How comes it then to be Separation in some, and not in others?*

Thus in the negative, those distinct Assemblies the Doctor would batter down, are not built on the same grounds, that the proper Saparatists stood on. Now,

2. I come to shew positively on what grounds I conceive they may stand. *Et quæ non prosunt Singula, juncta, juvant.* And if any of them prove firm, So far what is built upon the same will stand good, whosoever calls it a Mischeivous and Destructive piece of work.

1. The Teachers (I suppose) will say, as the Old Non-conformists (*Grave Consutat. p.* 35.) We desire to know by what warrant they can be accounted to be no Ministers now, that have given no just cause of Deprivation, since the time they were so Sufficiently called to the Ministry. They think, it is not in Mens power to degrade them from that office, without just cause. They have their office and Authority to Preach the Gospel from Christ, *Eph.* 4 11, 12. They were not made Ministers *pro tempore*. And the Doctor hath not proved that I can see, that they have given Just cause of Deprivation. And then it would seem, they have Authority from Christ still to preach the Truth, which none upon earth can lawfully deprive them of. *Fuller* in his *Abel Redivivus*, tells us, that *Bradford* said, If God should deliver him out of Prison, He would Preach still, though secretly

cretly, as the times would permit him. And that *Bilney* after his Recantation, and repentance for it, Preached first privately in Houses, and then in the fields, till he was apprehended and taken to Prison. And so the Old Non-conformists when silenced by the Bishops, scrupled not Preaching in private Houses, or in another Diocess, where they could be admitted, as their practice shewed.

2. The Teachers think there is great need of their service and pains still in Ministerial work, as well as when they were in place. Sure, there is work enough for all the sober Conformists, and Nonconformists too. Indeed if they can find nothing else to do, then to fill the people with greater Prejudices against Communion with the publick Congregations (a thing laid to their charge. p. 22.) for ought I know, it would be as well; if they would for ever hold their peace. And so I hope the Doctor is mistaken as to that, having been Misinformed: or however, that there are not many such. But generally they are better employed. Sure I am, that many Nonconformists have indeavoured, and have been the means to keep many to the publick Congregations, and to keep up in them a due esteem of sober conformable Preachers, who otherwise in all likelihood had been quite turned off.

But if indeed they aim at the same end, the Glory of God in the Salvation of Souls, (which there is no Minister of Christ, that understands his work, and his faithful in it, but designeth, and desireth the promoting of) shall their Brethren quarrel with them for this? Or would the Apostle *Paul* have done it, who when some Preached Christ even of envy and strife, yet did, and would rejoyce however that Christ was Preached, *Phil.* 1. 15, 16, 18. But I hope, it cannot be thought of these without uncharitableness, but that they preach Christ of good will. And methinks, it had been better, if the Doctor, before he so severely Censured and Condemned their Practice, had staid to see all the Churches in *London*, &c. provided of such Ministers and of such store of them too, that there was no need for any to repair to their Old Ministers, and others like them, that they could stand for no more then Cyphers. But when all the Parish-Ministers are not near Sufficient for so Populous a City, when such as deserve encouragement in their Places (as I am informed) have full Congregations, can the Doctor say in sober sadness, that it was better for all the rest to be untaught, then to be taught by such as do not conform? Are the souls of such multitudes of no more value, but that it

is fit to deprive them of the ordinary means of Salvation, unleſs they can have them, and will be content with them juſt in ſuch a mode? And is it better that they ſhould not worſhip God together at all, then that they ſhould not do it juſt in ſuch a way, as yet, would not make the Worſhip more acceptable unto God, nor more Profitable to themſelves, while they could not attend on it without much diſſatisfaction, and therefore probably not without more diſtraction ſhould not the ſence of their Duty (having been ſolemnly devoted, and ſet apart to the office and work of the Miniſtry) together with the neceſſity of ſouls, engage them to hold on in their Work; not in oppoſition to thoſe in place, but as Fellow-ſervants, lending them the beſt aſſiſtance they can? How dare they do other, when they think of that account they have to make to their great Lord and Maſter, though Men be angry at them, though their Fellow-ſervants will not thank them for their pains?

3. As for thoſe Non-conforming Teachers in *London*, who with their Aſſemblies (as I ſuppoſe) were eſpecially in the Doctor's eye, and under cenſure here, it is not unworthy of conſideration how loudly many of them were called on to their more ſtated Work, and ſolemn Meetings, by God's Thundring Judgments of Plague and Fire (as I remember Mr. *Baxter* takes notice, in his Plea for Peace) when many Conformable Preachers thought the ſervice too hot for them, and left it. And how the Lord was pleaſed at that time to own, and Encourage them with his preſence, and ſucceſs in their Labours, I think ſhould not, and hope will not be forgotten. Neither can I wonder, if many then wrought upon, fear to forſake the means which God did ſo ſignally own, and bleſs to their ſouls, leſt a worſe Plague ſhould come unto them, leſt the Lord ſhould be provoked again to ſend Meſſengers of wrath to them for their ſo ill entertaining of thoſe Meſſengers of Peace.

4. Further, as concerning the People that aſſemble with ſuch Teachers, they may have ſuch grounds as theſe. That there is an antecedent Obligation on Conſcience to aſſemble together on the account of Chriſtianity, whether humane Laws command, or prohibit it. (As the Doctor hath an Expreſſion ſomewhat parallel to this, in *Power of Excom.* p. 12.) And that they are not ſo ſtrictly confined to their own Pariſhes by the Law of God, but if they are not provided for at home, they may and ought to look out for their Souls abroad. That ſome Pariſh-Churches are not ſufficient to contain all, nor half of the Pariſhioners, that all

cannot

cannot hear, if they would, and yet the Eccleſiaſtical Rules or Canons forbid their going to another Pariſh. That ſome Pariſh-Miniſters are not to be owned as Miniſters of Chriſt. There are ſome ſuch blind Guides, as they that would go right, may juſtly fear to follow: Some like the falſe Prophets of old, that cauſed the People to err; their Doctrine ſo unſound, that it is dangerous for People to hear them. Some as if they were the Miniſters of Satan, bend their Wits to pervert, and miſapply the Holy Scriptures, and ſet themſelves to ſtrengthen the Hands of the Wicked, and to make the Hearts of the Righteous ſad; that inſtead of perſwading Men to follow after Holineſs, rather preach it down. And ſome of the People are excommunicated by the Eccleſiaſtical Courts, and as they judge wrongfully, for ſuch things as will not bear ſuch a cenſure. And ſome again look upon themſelves as excommunicated *ipſo facto* by the Eccleſiaſtical Canons. And ſuch being wrongfully caſt out of Communion with the Parochial Congregations, by what the Doctor hath granted (*Irenic. p.* 124.) are neceſſitated to ſeparate, and join with others that dare not deny them the priviledges which by the poſitive Laws of Chriſt are their right, thus unavoidably becomes their Duty. Again, divers judg it their Duty to cleave to their old Miniſters. They are not ſatisfied, that that Act which turned them out of their Livings and Pulpits, did, or could quite null their Miniſtry, and immediately deſtroy the Relation betwixt them and their People. They were lawful Paſtors before, and had done nothing that they know worthy of degrading and deprivation, and ſo for ought they know, they are rightfully ſtill what they were before. Hence they make it a queſtion, whether thoſe ejected Paſtors, or ſuch as without any conſent of theirs, and the People entred into their charge, be the Encroachers? And whether thoſe that quite deſert their old Miniſters, or they that ſtill adhere to them, do better? They doubt not but ſuch are true Miniſters of Chriſt ſtill, ſuch as he hath qualified, and called to the Office, and whoſe Miniſtry he hath owned, and bleſſed with ſucceſs, and ſtill doth. They dare not but own them as Miniſters of Chriſt, and cannot but bewail it as a Sin of the Times, that they have been, and are ſo much diſowned. They conclude, that if they are true Miniſters ſtill, it is their duty ſtill to preach the Goſpel, as they have opportunity, and conſequently that it may be the duty of ſome to hear them. Again, one thing more, it may be ſome have met with that which the Doctor ſaith (*Iren. p.* 109.) upon the Queſtion, 'Whether in a time when Churches are divided, it 'be a Chriſtians duty to communicate with any of thoſe Parties which 'divide the Church?——A caſe not hard to be decided (ſays he) ——By

'vertue

'vertue of his general Obligation to Communion, he is bound to adhere to that Church which appears most to retain its Evangelical Purity.——But ſuppoſing (them alike impure) either he hath joyned formerly with one of them, or (not)——If he be joined already with 'that Church, and ſees no other but as impure as that, he is bound to 'declare againſt the impurity of the Church—— Now they will think this Rule, or Advice of the Doctor's impracticable, that they ſhould declare againſt the impurity of the Church, and ſo continue Communion with it; for if they judg any of its impurity lying in the Book of Common-Prayer, the Church hath provided, that whoſoever declares againſt it, ſhall be cut off immediately from her Communion. So *Canon* 4. ſaith, Whoſoever ſhall hereafter affirm, that the Form of God's Worſhip in the Church of *England*, eſtabliſhed by Law, and contained in the Book of Common-Prayer and Adminiſtration of Sacraments, is a corrupt, ſuperſtitious, or unlawful Worſhip of God, or containeth any thing in it that is repugnant to the Scriptures, let him be excommunicated *ipſo facto*. Thus ſuch would be excommunicated forthwith by the Sentence of the Church in her Canons, without any need of further Sentence in her Courts: how then can a Man declare againſt the impurity of the Church, and yet hold Communion with her? And further they may think, it follows from the Doctor's own Words, that if a Man ſees another Church not ſo impure, (and that comes nearer to the primitive Conſtitution, as *p.* 110.) he ſhould chuſe to join with that Church. But here it may be the Doctor would ſay (as *Conferences*, *p.* 148.) 'There are many things in it [his *Irenicum*] which if 'Dr. *Stillingfleet* were to write now, he would not have ſaid; for there 'are ſome things which ſhew his Youth, and want of due Conſideration: others which he yeilded too far, *&c.* And I am content that this ſhould not be admitted without due caution, and conſideration, that it ſhould have ſome limitations. But thus you have ſome of the grounds, whereon theſe diſtinct Aſſemblies ſtand, *Et valeant quantum valere debent.*

And when the Doctor aggravates the Crime, that it ſhould be thus [*in ſuch a juncture of Affairs,*] methinks, it might have been expected of him, having ſuch a zeal for the Churches Peace, and an happy Union, that he could be *contented to be made a Sacrifice, if thereby he might cloſe up the Breaches among us* (as he ſays in *Epiſt. Dedic.*) I ſay, it might have been expected, that in ſuch a juncture of Affairs when he preached before the Parliament, he would put in ſome good Word, for the taking off thoſe unneceſſary Impoſitions, which are indeed the Apple

of

of Contention, the main cause of our Divisions. And such a Motion (especially had it taken) might have procured him as great Renown as his *Irenicum*.

P. 23. When he says of the Protestant Religion, *I never expect to see it survive the destruction of the Church of* England.

I doubt not, his meaning is, that it would not survive here amongst us. But if by the Church of *England*, he meaneth the Church under the present Form, and established Rule (as his word is:) as if there could be no alteration of that, without the destruction of the Protestant Religion. I would only have these two things enquired into here, viz. Whether had we not the Protestant Religion in *England* sometime without, and before this established Rule (which was since his Majesty's Restauration?) many Years we were without any such Rule established. And whether the Protestant Religion hath not been preserved in other Countries, without having this same Rule established?

P. 24. The Doctor citeth Mr. *Baxter* there, and elsewhere, whereof I shall take little notice, concluding that he will answer for himself, unless it be judged that the Doctor is answered already in what is written, In *Sacrilegious Desertion*, *Plea for Peace*, and *Way to Concord*.

P. 25. *And what Ground can they have to separate and divide those Churches?*——

Perhaps they may be ready to retort here, Dr. *Manton*'s Church, Mr. *Calamy*'s Church, &c. before *Aug.* 24. 62. were true Churches, and what ground had others to separate and divide those Churches? Not such as are necessitated to withdraw, but they that force them to it, are the great Church-dividers.

P. 26. *It is possible, at first, there might be no more Christians in one City than could meet in one Assembly for Worship*, &c.

So particular Congregations seem fit, *Ordine Naturæ Constituendis*; as Families before Cities, and Kingdomes. Yet I am not against a sub-ordination of Particular Congregations unto their Authority as regularly conjoyned, and exerting it self according to Scripture-Rule.

P. 27. *Why then should not Churches be reduced to particular Families, when by that means they may fully enjoy the Liberty of their Consciences, and avoid the Scandal of breaking the Laws?*

But

But their conſciences tell them, that Family-Worſhip is not all the Worſhip God requires. And the Doctor himſelf has told them (*Iren.* p. 109.) *Every Chriſtian is under an obligation to joyn in Church-Society with others.* And as touching the Scandal of breaking the Laws, that Able Lawyer before Praiſed (whoſoever he was) tells them that the words of the Law cannot with reaſon and Charity be underſtood and conſtrued, as intended againſt a real truly Chriſtian exerciſe of Religion (*p.* 3.) His reaſon is, Becauſe I ſuſpect (ſayes he) that ſuch an Interpretation would make the Statute a Nullity (N. B.) in it ſelf; for that all Caſuiſts, Lawyers and Divines do agree, That every Law made againſt the Law of God, is null (*ipſo facto*) as to any obligation of Conſcience. And how harſh would it be (as he ſayes) to make ſuch a conſtruction of the words, If any perſon or perſons above the number four, ſhall worſhip God truly and ſincerely in other manner, &c. ſhall incur the Penalty of the Act.

P. 27, 28. The Doctor would make the would believe, that it is paſt controverſie, when the Apoſtles planted a Church, they put the ſame under the care and government of a Biſhop and Presbyters: Whether he thought ſo when he wrote his *Irenicum*, let any man of reaſon read and judg. He had not then diſcovered any ſuch diſtinction of officers, in the *Jews* Synagogues. And this he lays there 'as a foun-'dation (*p.* 239.) that the Apoſtles in the forming of Churches did ob-'ſerve the cuſtoms of the *Jewes* Synagogues. For he cites *Grotius*, *Totum* '*Regimen Eccleſiarum Chriſti conformatum fuit ad Synagogarum Exemplar*, 'with others. And (*p.* 252.) 'All order is not power nor power juridical, 'nor all juridical power a ſole power, therefore it is a meer Paralogiſm 'in any from order to infer power, or from a Delegated power by con-'ſent, to infer a Juridical power by divine right: or laſtly, from a power in 'commnon with others, to deduce a power excluding others. All which 'they are guilty of, who meerly from the name of an *Archiſynagogus* 'would fetch a perpetual neceſſity of Juriſdiction in one above the El-'ders joyned with him, &c. And I cannot ſee that what is here ſaid, did either ſhew his youth, or want of due Conſideration. Methinks, it is very gravely ſpoken, not unbecoming a Doctor of the Chair. And ſee what he ſayes, (*p.* 276.) 'As to the matter itſelf, I believe up-'on the ſtricteſt enquiry *Medina's* judgment will prove true, That *Jerome*, *Auſtin*, *Ambroſe*, *Sedulius*, *Primaſius*, *Theodoret*, *Theophylact*, 'were all of *Aerius* his Judgment as to the identity of both name and 'order of Biſhops and Presbyters in the primitive Church, &c.

If I thought this would not ſuffice, you ſhould have more

more. How few of his diſſenting Brethren yet, with *Aerius* would ſeparate from the Church, meerly upon this account, that it hath Biſhops? An *Epiſcopus præſes* would generally be allowed of; though an Eccleſiaſtical order of Presbyters, that are not Biſhops, is not found in Holy Scripture, (as Mr. *Corbet. Church-Unity*, p. 3.)

Pag. 29. *If we look over the ancient Canons of the Church, we ſhall find two things very plain in them.* 1. *That the notion of a Church was the ſame with that of a Dioceſs; or ſuch a number of Chriſtians as were under the inſpection of a Biſhop.*] I have not time to look over the ancient Canons now: but if we look over all the Books of the New Teſtament, we ſhall not find a Dioceſan Church there. The Doctor could find no ſuch thing in the Text, *Act.* 20. 28. *Take heed to your ſelves* (ſpoken to the Elders of the Church of *Epheſus*, v. 17.) *and to the flock over which God hath made you overſeers,* ἐπισκόπους, *Biſhops:* which the Doctor improves againſt our Congregational Men, (*Irenic.* p. 349.) But I cannot ſee how it makes for Dioceſans, who are for one Biſhop in a Dioceſs. They are for many Churches under the inſpection of one Biſhop; whereas this Text ſpeaks of one Church under the inſpection of many Biſhops. I think no ſuch thing will be made appear from the Government of the Jewiſh Synagogues, which the Doctor would have laid as a foundation. And ſpeaking of the increaſe of the Churches power, he ſaith, (*Irenic.* p. 374.) *Nothing can be more evident, than that it aroſe not from any divine inſtitution, but only from Poſitive and Eccleſiaſtical Laws,* &c. *And as to Church-Government, we may find ſome Churches without Biſhops for a long time, ſome but with one Biſhop in a whole nation, many Cities without any, where Biſhops were common; many Churches diſcontinue Biſhops for a great while where they had been; no certain rule obſerved for modelling their Dioceſſes where they were ſtill continued. Will not all theſe things make it ſeem very improbable that it ſhould be an Apoſtolical Inſtitution, that no Church ſhould be without a Biſhop.*

2. P. 29. *That thoſe Presbyters who rejected the authority of their Biſhop, or affected ſeparate meetings, where no fault could be found with the doctrine of a Church, were condemned of Schiſm.*] Now 1. The Doctor ſetting this down with approbation, muſt grant, when fault may be found with the Doctrine of a Church, ſeparate Meetings are not to be condemned of Schiſm. 2. If he will allow of ſeparate Meetings when the Doctrine of a Church is corrupted, by a parity of reaſon, he ſhould allow them, if the Worſhip be corrupted: and then there may be ſome other account and reaſon to juſtifie ſeparate Meetings, beſides that which the Doctor here takes notice of. Yet I

will not say, that any the least corruption in Worship, or Error in Doctrine is a ground for separation; though if our assent to the least error, or approbation of the least corruption be required, as a condition of having communion, that will warrant Separation. 3. Sometimes Bishops were set up against Bishops, and each party striving for their own, would not have communion with the other. This is that which *Cyprian* calls *Erigere Altare contra Altare*, as the Learned *Hales* says, (*p.* 222.) In which case it might happen, that neither part were free from the guilt of Schism. 4. The Doctor cannot say of his dissenting Brethren, that they affect separate Meetings; but indeed are driven to them. It is no joy to them to be in *statu separato*: but they do more desire, than hope to have dividing terms and impositions taken away. I could wish a due comprehension was offered them, to try whether they affect separate Meetings. 5. If the Doctor should look over the ancient Canons of the Church again, I very much question whether he can find such things imposed upon the Presbyters, as are now imposed, without submitting to which, they might not exercise their office.

P. 29. *So the Followers of* Eustathius Sebastenus, *who withdrew from the publick Congregations on pretence of greater sanctity and purity, in* Paphlagonia, *were condemned by the Council at* Gangræ.] Yet he tells us, *Irenic. p.* 65. *The* Concilium Gangrense *condemned* Eustathius Sebastenus *for making a necessity of diversity of habits, among Christians, for their profession*; διὰ τὸ ἀσκητὸν. A worthy pretence of sanctity and strictness. But indeed the Council had more to say to *Eustachius* and his Followers, than that which the Doctor takes notice of: As is to be seen in the Epistle prefix'd to the Acts of that Council (*Carranza. p.* 65, &c.) They condemned Marriages, and thereupon many Women left their own Husbands; and Husbands forsook their Wives, professing continence, which when they could not retain, they committed Adultery. Indeed they despised common Garments, and took up new and strange habits. Strange indeed, while the women went in mens Apparel: yea, they would cut their hair like men, and placed Religion in these things to boot. This and more is to be seen there. Their errors both in opinion and practice were very gross, which the Council takes notice of, and condemns.

Ibid. *So were those who separated from their Bishops, though otherwise never so orthodox, by the Council at* Constantinople, *and the Council at* Carthage.] If I had time to search, I make no doubt but the cases of those condemned would be found vastly different from the

the case of the present Non-conformists, that are cast out for no crime they know of, and then condemned for affecting separation, when others have cast them out sore against their wills. The Doctor knows how long *Chrysostomes* Followers withdrew themselves from communion with the Bishops, and though he would not commend the act, yet he speaks small, and leaves it doubtful, *Irenic. p.* 110. But he was satisfied to clear *Jerome* there, who suspended communion with three Bishops for a time. But such a Council as thought *John Chrysostome* deserved to be deposed, would no doubt condemn the *Johannites*, his Followers, that would still flock after him. And if what *Socrates* relates of them be true, that they set the Church on fire, which ended not there, but also burnt down the Senators Court, such an action none can justifie. But blessed be God, our Dissenters cannot be justly charged with such turbulency; neither will they be found the men that set the Church on fire.

P. 29. If the Doctor will have the practice of Dissenters compared to the Novatian Schism (which he there mentioneth) Mr. *Corbet* hath obviated him, *Of Church-Unity*, *p.* 42, 43.

Ib. & *p.* 30. To that which he saith there, [*I do not remember one instance in Antiquity, wherein separating from Orthodox Bishops, and setting up Meetings without their authority, and against their consent, was acquitted from the sin of Schism.*] I would turn that of Mr. *Baxter*, (*Sacrilegious Desertion*, *p.* 45.) Prove you, if you can, that on *August* 24, 1662, they were degraded, or these true Churches dissolved on any reason, which any Churches for six hundred years after Christ would own.

I only add this, that admitting what the Doctor would have here, it will unavoidably follow, that it is possible the Church may suffer most under Orthodox Bishops. As if a Set of these should ever happen to take a distaste against preaching, and so injoyn only the reading of such Homilies as they thought fit in Churches, and take such order, that if any Minister preached, the Officers should pull him down; now if it would be the sin of Schism to set up other Meetings without their authority, and against their consent, might it not be better for the Church that they were Hereticks, and for imposing false Doctrine, whereby Ministers and People might be excused in their separation.

P. 30. The Doctor seems to allow of the separate Meetings of the *Joannites*, or Followers of S. *Chrysostom*, after his Banishment, and the coming in of *Arsacius*, they being unsatisfied in his choice: but this he thinks *far from justifying the willful separation of Presbyters*

and people from the communion of their Bishops, when they do agree in the same faith.] But the Doctor might have given it a softer term, than [*willful separation.*] *Arsacius* had governed the Church of *Constantinople* before *Chrysostom*, (as *Socrates*:) so the people had trial of both. They were not satisfied with the deposing of *Chrysostom*, or with the coming in of *Arsacius*. So are many unsatisfied with the putting out of their old Pastors, and with the manner of the coming in of their Successors. Might they see those Ministers restored to those publick places, the world should see then they were not for separate Meetings. *Acriores hoc seculo inter Ecclesiæ Doctores lites fuerunt, quàm unquam antè* (as *Hottinger. secul. sen cap. 5. sect. 1. p. 238. 255, 256.*) There were sharper contentions among the Teachers of the Church in that age, than ever. *Jerome* writes against *Ruffinus*. *Epiphanius* grievously falls out with *Chrysostom*, because he would not condemn *Origen*'s Works. *Jerome* and *Austin* had a great contest about the Apostle *Paul* reproving *Peter*. *Cyril*, Bishop of *Alexandria*, and *John* of *Antioch* deposing one another. And a Council deposed *Chrysostom*. Here was sad work indeed: when the Guides and Pastors of a Church divide, and go several ways, Schisms cannot be avoided; but let them look to it, that are the causes thereof.

P. 30. 31. As to what follows there, I am of the Doctors mind, that we should not be for breaking all in pieces, if we cannot have all to our mind, and as we judge to be most agreeable to the Scripture-rule. But this makes nothing against those who could submit to a Form and Model of Government, they judge not agreeable to the primitive Plat-form; provided they be not required to profess and declare contrary to what they believe, and to practise what they doubt of, which in them would certainly be a sin. And would not Dissenters generally bear with the practice of others (for peace-sake) might they be dispensed with, as to their own practice? where it would be no sin for others to dispense with them, but it would be a sin for them to practise what they suspect to be unlawful. This the Doctor should have considered. And I would fain know, whether the like can be said of those Schismaticks of old, who separated from their Orthodox Bishops.

Ibid. *It is most certainly our duty to preserve peace and unity among Christians; and it is impossible so to do, if men break all orders in pieces for the fancy they have taken up of a primitive Plat-form.*] O that it was seriously thought on by those who are so ready to charge others with breach of Peace, Unity and Order, that it is their duty as well

well to do what in them lieth to promote the ſame. Then is it not their duty to do what they can to remove unneceſſary dividing terms? Men may pleaſe themſelves in talking for peace and unity; but how can we ever hope for peace in the Church, while unneceſſary things, to ſay no more, that to many conſcientious men ſeem unlawful, are enforced as if they were things highly neceſſary? Such Orders are the cauſe of our Diſorders, and were better broken, and laid aſide, than kept up.

P. 31. *It is a great fault among ſome who pretend great niceneſs in ſome poſitive duties, that they have ſo little regard to comparative duties: for that which may be a duty in one caſe, when it comes to thwart a greater duty, may be none.*] And ſuppoſe it a duty for Church-Governours in ſome caſes to keep up their own Rules and Orders, yet may it not ceaſe to be ſo when it comes to thwart a greater duty? And is it not a greater duty to ſee that God's Worſhip be kept up, than to keep up their own Orders? And if all the Conformable Miniſters in *London* are not enough to inſtruct the people there, is it not a duty to ſuffer Non-conformiſts to preach, (who cannot, dare not conform) rather than becauſe of their not conforming, to hinder ſo many, who might be getting good by them? If God will have mercy, and not ſacrifice ſometimes; ſhould not thoſe that profeſs to rule for God, be rather for no Service-Book, no Surplice, *&c.* than that many ſhould have no publick Worſhip, no Preaching, none of God's Ordinances diſpenſed to them? Thus may not the Governors of the Church ſay, applying the Doctors words home to themſelves: *Can we think that a duty lying upon us, which in our Circumſtances makes a far greater duty impracticable?* Is it not more our duty, to take care, that the people may have ſound doctrine taught, and the way of Salvation held forth to them, and that they worſhip God as he has commanded; than that we ſo ſtiffly ſtand for our own Ceremonies, with other things, that he has not commanded?

P. 31, 32. *Is there any thing Chriſt and his Apoſtles have charged more upon the conſciences of all Chriſtians, than ſtudying to preſerve peace and unity among Chriſtians?*] If this be charged upon all Chriſtians, then I hope, they are concerned in the charge, as well as others. And then how do they ſtudy to preſerve the peace and unity of the Church, that lay the ſame on things unneceſſary, and ſuch, wherein it cannot be expected, that all good Chriſtians ſhould ever agree? *Opinionum diverſitas & opinantium unitas non ſunt* ἀσύγκριτα. Without the ſtrict impoſing of ſuch things (which men either have no power to impoſe, or however might ſafely let alone, and forbear to impoſe)

impoſe) we might ſooner be at peace, and agreed.

Again, without doubt, it is no leſs a duty to indeavour to promote Faith and Holineſs, than to ſtudy to preſerve Peace and Unity. The wiſdom that is from above is firſt pure, then peaceable. If peace cannot be had, without the loſs of truth and purity, without offering violence unto, and defiling conſcience, there is no remedy in this caſe, but we muſt be content to bid farewel to peace. But indeed that is the beſt and ſureſt peace and unity, which is founded in the truth and purity of Religion. And I ſhould never hope for an happy peace to be obtained by ſuch a method and means, as have no tendency to Holineſs, but would debauch the Conſciences of many. As I ſhould greatly wonder, ſuppoſing all the Non-conformiſts in *England* did now knock off from all Miniſterial Work for peace-ſake, if that peace could be bleſt, which would bring a curſe with it to the ſouls of many, thus deprived of the ordinary means of grace and knowledge.

Pag. 32. When the Doctor ſays that [*For the ſake of peace and unity we are commanded to practiſe meekneſs, humility, patience, ſelf-denial, and ſubmiſſion to Governors.*] It mindeth me of a paſſage in Mr. *Corbet, Church-Unity*, p. 56. "The Conſcientious that are willing to bid high for peace, (yet) cannot reſign their Conſciences "to the wills of men; and humility and ſoberneſs doth not oblige "them to act contrary to their own judgments out of reverence to "their ſuperiors; they cannot help themſelves but their ſuperiors "may. With which take along that which the Doctor hath, (*Irenic. p.* 118.) *If it be ſaid, that men are bound to be ruled by their Governors, in determining what things are lawful, and what not? To this it is anſwered, firſt, no true Proteſtant can ſwear blind obedience to Church-Governors in all things. It is the higheſt Uſurpation to rob men of the liberty of their judgments*, &c. And ſee more to the purpoſe, p. 119.

Ibid. *As nothing tends more to unite mens hearts, than joyning in the ſame Prayers and Sacraments; ſo nothing doth more alienate mens affections, than withdrawing from each other into ſeparate Congregations.*] And therefore the Doctor did well to propound it from Mr. *Hales* (*Irenic. p.* 120.) *As a remedy to prevent Schiſm, to have all Liturgies and publick Forms of Service ſo framed, as that they admit not of particular and private fancies, but contain only ſuch things in which all Chriſtians do agree.* And till then as much mutual forbearance and charity as can be, ſhould be ſhewed towards one another. And why might not the Congregations of Conformiſts, and thoſe of Non-conformiſts bear with one another, as the Churches of the Jews, and

and those of the Gentiles were to do, that might happen to be distinct in the same City. As the Doctor says, *Irenic.* p. 237.) *I deny not but at the meeting of* Paul *and* Peter *at* Jerusalem, *when they observed how God did bless the one most in the Circumcision, the other in the Uncircumcision, there was an agreement between them for the one to lay out his pains chiefly upon the Jews, and the other upon the Gentiles; and in probability where they met in any City, the one gathered a Church of the Jews, and the other of the Gentiles.* And what a pity is it, that Conformists and Non-conformists, such as profess to aim at the same end as the propagating of the Gospel, the good of Souls, cannot agree, that the work may be carried on to the best advantage, so as to gain the more? They that have their hearts alienated from their Brethren, that jump not with them in all things, I suspect are more zealous for setting up a party, than for promoting the true Interest of Christianity. I would love and honour sober, serious Conformists, as I doubt not there are many such, whose Religion lies not all in an outward form, and Ceremonies. And though I be no Congregational Man, yet though I know many of them could not be satisfied to joyn with such as I am, I would not that my heart and affections should be alienated from them, who I believe do many of them sincerely serve God in their way. And I think they do better, than such as would hinder them from serving God at all, unless in a way that is contrary to their Judgment; or such as would yield to mens will against their own judgments here.

P. 32. *Which tempts some to spiritual pride, and scorn and contempt of others.*] Of which so far as any of us are guilty, I wish we may see our sin, and be ashamed. To pity and pray for others, whom we may think out of the way in some things, were a great deal fitter for Christians, than to scorn and contemn them. And if we fear there is too much formality in many, have we not cause to reflect on our selves? How slighty dead and formal are we often in holy duties? If we suspect some corrupt mixtures in publick Worship, have we not cause to look home, and to be humbled? Is there no mixture at all of pride, hypocrisie, or worldly distracting thoughts, with our Religious Services?

P. 33. —*And provokes others to lay open the follies, and indiscretions, and immoralities of those who pretend to so much purity and spirituality above their Brethren.*] As for those who pretend to so much purity and spirituality above others, and yet are guilty of plain immoralities, for me let them be laid open. I have nothing to plead for them. But I should have so much charity for the Doctor, that he

he would be very tender, how he laid open the weakneſſes of others, to expoſe Religion it ſelf to ſcorn. As he ſays (Anſwer to ſeveral Treatiſes, p. 6.) *Have I made the practice of true devotion ridiculous, and the real expreſſions of piety, the ſubject of ſcorn and deriſion?* I wiſh thoſe that have been guilty this way, could ſee their error and recant.

P. 33.—*For they ſay that cauſleſs renouncing communion with true Churches is Schiſm, eſpecially if it be joyned with ſetting up Anti-churches unwarrantably againſt them*] For this Mr. *Baxter* is cited (*Way of Concord, part.* 3. *ch.* 1. *ſect.* 40. *p.* 13.) And it is a wonder how the Doctor could over-look what follows (in the ſame Page, ſect. 43. *The greateſt and commoneſt Schiſm is by dividing Laws and Canons, which cauſleſly ſilence Miniſters, ſcatter Flocks, and decree the unjuſt Excommunication of Chriſtians, and deny communion to thoſe that yield not to ſinful, or unneceſſary ill-made terms of Communion,* &c. This was ſpoken of before. They ſay, ſome, after breaking and robbing an Houſe, or the like, the better to make their eſcape, have cried out as loudly as any, Turn the Thief, turn the Thief. The Papiſts cry out againſt us as Schiſmaticks, when they are the Schiſmaticks themſelves.

Ibid. *This is not dealing with us with that fairneſs and ingenuity which our former Brethren uſed; for they avow the fact of ſeparation, but deny it to be ſinful; theſe owning it to be ſinful have no other refuge left but to deny the fact, which is evident to all perſons.*]

The Doctor had been newly before muſteringhis Forces againſt thoſe of the Congregational Way; I am glad to ſee them part ſo fairly, that after all he can call them Brethren. Here now he is charging thoſe of the Presbyterian Perſwaſion, or ſo reputed. And he chargeth them home, that they deal not with that fairneſs and ingenuity as others. And yet I queſtion not, but he had newly before the penning of this Sermon, read Mr. *Corbet*; for he takes notice of his late Piece) whom conſult (*Of Church-Unity, p.* 30, *&c.*) It is no Schiſm, as he ſays, but a Duty not to adhere to an unity of external order ſo ſet and urged, as that it tends to the deſtruction or notable detriment of Faith and Holineſs, which are the end of all Church-Order. The means are good in reference to their end, and muſt never be uſed in a way deſtructive to it. So he: and does not Reaſon and Religion both ſay the ſame? (And *p.* 33. 34.) "There is a great difference between inimical Separa-"tion, like Sedition in a Common-wealth, and Segregation upon "neceſſary cauſes without breach of Charity. —The ſcope here-

of

of is not to ſet up Churches againſt Churches, but either occaſional and temporary Aſſemblies, or at the moſt, but divers Churches diſtinguiſhed by their ſeveral places of Aſſembling, or by diverſity of external order, as the allowed Congregations of Foreigners in *London*, are diſtinguiſhed from the Pariſh Churches. Now may not others ſay, that the Doctor dealeth not here with the fairneſs and ingenuity, which might have been expected, to take no notice hereof?

But methinks, this is a marvellous ſtrange thing, that they ſhould be repreſented as not fair and ingenuous, for not being ingenuous. Is this a fault in them, that they are unwilling to make their differences with the Church of *England* appear greater than they are? A fault which the Doctor himſelf afterwards (*p.* 56.) adviſeth them to take heed of. And it is good advice. So methinks he ſhould forgive them this wrong. Or is this a fault in them, that they are at no further diſtance from the Church of *England*? I hope the Doctor cannot think ſo. Is it not an argument of their tenderneſs, candor and ingenuity, that they ſo readily acknowledge what is good even in thoſe they differ from, that they are for narrowing the difference all they can? This the Doctor would have.

P. 33. But ſays he, the fact of Separation is evident to all. *For do they not do the ſame things, and in the ſame manner that the others do? How comes it then to be ſeparation in ſome and not in others?*] Shall I tell you how it comes about? Why, thus; becauſe what they do is not upon the Separatiſts Principles. And therefore indeed it is not in the ſame manner. A meer local ſeparation cannot prove them guilty of a ſinful ſeparation. The Doctor cannot but ſay, that one Pariſh-Meeting is locally ſeparated from another. Nor will it be proved by their meeting in private houſes, and more obſcure places, when they can have no other. For ſo did ſome Pariſh-Miniſters after the dreadful Fire in *London*, 1666: whom yet I know the Doctor would acquit from the ſin of Separation. But he tells us a little before, "*They preach when and where it is forbidden by Law.*] Then it ſeems the Doctor holds, that the Law muſt determine what is Schiſm and ſinful Separation, and what is not. And then methinks it follows, that if they were not forbidden by Law, their practice would be lawful, not a ſinful ſeparation. Now what a good and charitable Law would that be, that would immediately deliver ſo many honeſt, well-meaning men from the guilt of ſinful ſeparation? And here what the Lawyer ſays, runs in my mind, *ſcil.* [*If the worſhip in it ſelf be evil, it is intollerable in four; if good, fourſcore cannot make it evil.*]

But the Doctor adds, "*They worship God, and administer Sacraments by other Rules, and after a different manner than what our Church requires.*] Now to this I would say, either (as the Lawyer, who in some things speaks also like a Divine) their Worship is not to be accounted after a different manner: as our Saviour taught his Disciples to pray, *Matth.* 6. 9. *After this manner therefore pray ye*, &c. And so we must think, their Prayers, *Act* 4. 24. *&c.* were according to the Lords Prayer, agreeing for matter, though they used not the very words. Did the Disciples of Christ pray in any other manner than according to the Lords Prayer? is his question upon it, *p.* 5. Or else I would say, their worshipping God, though after a different manner from that which the Church of *England* requires, will not necessarily prove them guilty of Separation. They may worship God according to Scripture-Rule, and after that manner which God allows in his word, though not just after the manner of the Church of *England*. Or else lastly, it must be said, that Foreigners coming to live amongst us, should be counted Separatists, a French Church, or a Dutch Church Separatists, if they did not worship God, and administer Sacraments just after the mode of the Church of *England*: and so likewise some Parochial Congregations must be in part guilty of the sin of Separation, not coming up fully to those Rules, and that mode of Worship which the Church of *England* hath enjoyned.

P. 33. *They are very unwilling to confess a Separation, because they have formerly condemned it with great severity; and yet they do the same things for which they charged others, as guilty of a sinful Separation.*] Here the Doctor seems a little uncharitable in his censure. They cannot see, nor hath the Doctor proved, that what they do is the same with what they condemned. It is their grief, that they are driven to any course, which may at all look like separation. But who drive them to it? They dare not decline their duty for fear of mens taking offence, and counting it separation. The Learned and Renowned *Hales* (*Of Schism, oct. p.* 230.) grants Religious Assembling besides publick Order, in some cases, not only lawful, but of necessity and duty. And there is not a little to be said for it in the present case. And suppose another Order and Government settled by Authority, and those things injoyned, which would bear as hard on their party, as these do upon Dissenters, I would have better thoughts of some of them, than to imagine, that they would thereupon wholly lay down their Ministry, that whatever need there was of them, they would not keep up any Assemblies for God's Worship;

Worſhip; becauſe the times did not allow it. If they were in the like circumſtances, ejected by authority for Conformity, as others for Nonconformity, if they would look upon it as ſinful ſeparation, for them to act any more as Miniſters, I am much miſtaken in many of them.

P. 33, 34. *For the Aſſembly of Divines urged their diſſenting Brethren to comply with their Rules of Church-Government, and charged them with Schiſm if they did it not; whereas they only deſired to enjoy ſuch liberty as to their ſeparate Congregations, as is now pleaded for by our diſſenting Brethren.*] Thoſe Papers for Accommodation, Printed 1648, which the Doctor referreth unto, I have not, neither know I how, or where to procure them ſuddenly. But I have this to ſay: 1. I ſuppoſe his diſſenting Brethren think, there is more Scripture-Warrant for the Rules of Church-Government offered by that Aſſembly, than can be ſhewn for the eſtabliſh'd Rule now. And it was very ſtrange, if they who propoſed them thought not ſo; ſeeing they were generally Conformiſts before (very few of them excepted.) Other Churches, with whom they had correſpondence, took them not for Knaves, nor Fools. And what the Doctor thought once of ſuch a Rule of Government as is eſtabliſhed, may be ſeen, (*Irenic. p.* 414, 415.) *The Epiſcopal Men will hardly find any evidence in Scripture, or the practice of the Apoſtles, for Churches conſiſting of many fixed Congregations for Worſhip, under the charge of one perſon,* &c.——*Then all ſuch things muſt be retrieved which were unqueſtionably of the primitive practice, but have been grown out of uſe through the length and corruption of times. Such are the reſtoring of the Presbiteries of the ſeveral Churches, as the Senate to the Biſhop*——*The contracting of Dioceſſes into ſuch a compaſs as may be fitted for the perſonal inſpection of the Biſhop*——*The conſtant preaching of the Biſhop*—*The Solemnity of Ordinations, with the conſent of the People*——*The employing of none in judging Church matters, but the Clergy. Theſe are things unqueſtionably of the primitive practice, and no argument can be drawn from the preſent ſtate of things, why they are not as much, if not more neceſſary than ever. And therefore all who appeal to the practice of the primitive Church, muſt condemn themſelves, if they juſtifie the neglect of them.*

2. Let us ſuppoſe that Aſſembly too rigid in their principles, that cannot juſtifie or excuſe others who go beyond them. 3. Whatever was diſputed in thoſe times, no ſuch rigour was then practiſed. I ſhould think, the Doctor can ſcarce forget this, that many of our Pulpits were open both for Epiſcopal and Congregational Men,

to preach with us. And how many Epiſcopal Men that in thoſe days held their Livings ſtill? And ſome well known to be ſo, who had the hands of Presbyterians to help them into Livings. And how many of theſe, who would have judged it a lamentable thing, had ſuch a Rule been ſet up in force, that people muſt have been untaught, and as Sheep without a Shepherd, rather than have ſuch as were of the Epiſcopal, or Congregational Perſwaſion to be their Guides? The *Worceſterſhire* Agreement, and *Cumberland* and *Weſtmerland* Agreement with others, and ſome that were never Printed, may bear witneſs how willing they were to have the aſſiſtance of their Brethren (though of a differing perſwaſion as to Church-Government, &c.) in that work, for which all their Forces united were too little.

P. 34. *They thought no perſon was to be indulged as to any error or ſcruple of Conſcience; but with this proviſo, that in all other parts of Worſhip they joyn with the Congregation wherein they live.*] Then will the Doctor plead for them ſo far, that they may have a Diſpenſation, or Indulgence, as to what they ſcruple? Many ſcruple impoſed Forms of Prayer, (ſuppoſe it to be their weakneſs, and an error, yet they really ſcruple, and doubt the lawfulneſs thereof.) And more ſcruple the Common Prayer, as not altogether ſound. And ſome think, their preſence would be an approbation of the Corruptions in it, unleſs they may have liberty to teſtifie againſt thoſe Corruptions. Which if they do, the Canon pronounceth them excommunicated, *ipſo facto*. Will the Doctor get that taken off? Many ſcruple the procuring of God-fathers, and God-mothers, as Sponſors for their Children in Baptiſm, and the addition of the Croſs to Baptiſm (which to them looks like a Sacrament of mens coining.) Many ſcruple kneeling in the receiving of the Lord's Supper (apprehending a Table-geſture moſt ſuitable to that Ordinance, and ſuppoſing that the Diſciples uſed ſuch a geſture, whom they would not pretend to excel in their Devotion.) It would eaſe many, might they be conſidered as to theſe Scruples.

Again ſome think, they have enough againſt the Miniſter of the place where they live. It may be, he is very vicious, and wofully debauched. It may be, he is continually flying out againſt true Sanctity and Piety, as Fanaticiſm, and fooliſh preciſeneſs, or as meer hypocriſie. It may be, if they ſhould come to him with their Doubts and Scruples, deſirous to be reſolved and ſatisfied, he could ſay nothing to them, or would but deride and diſcourage them. And how can they be ſatisfied to commit the care of their Souls to one, they know, has no care of them.

Again,

Again, must the people needs joyn in the Congregation where they live, when there are many Pariſhes ſo large, as the Churches could not poſſibly contain all that belong to them, no, not by thouſands? Should they meet together, yet the Worſhip to the far greater part of them would be no better than Latine Service.

And if people are no way tollerably provided for in the Pariſhes where they live, and yet they muſt reſt content, muſt we not ſuppoſe that thoſe things which have been pleaded for ſo much as lawful, and indifferent, are indeed the neceſſary things, and ſound Preaching the ordinary means of Salvation, with the Salvation of Souls, are but indifferent things? ſo it ſhould be neceſſary to keep to the Rules of the Church, but not neceſſary to learn how to walk by Scripture Rule. Neceſſary to go to our Pariſh-Church; but not neceſſary to learn the way to Heaven. So it ſhould be indifferent, whether Souls attain to ſound knowledge and faith, indifferent whether they be converted and ſaved. While they keep to order here, it matters not what becomes of them hereafter.

—P. 35. *And that if they can hold occaſional communion without ſin, they know no reaſon why it may not be ordinary without ſin too, and then ſeparation would be needleſs. To which they ſubjoyn theſe remarkable words, which I heartily wiſh our Brethren at this day would think ſeriouſly upon, to ſeparate from thoſe Churches ordinarily and viſibly with whom occaſionally you may joyn without ſin, ſeemeth to be a moſt unjuſt ſeparation.*]

Anſ. 1. Many Non-conformiſts have ordinarily joyned with them in the Parochial Congregations, where they have had opportunity; though withal they have had other occaſional Meetings: our bleſſed Saviour and his Apoſtles went to the Jews Synagogues, yet would not be abſolutely confined to them; but had other Aſſemblies beſides.

2. Where ſuch are put in the place of Miniſters, and publick Teachers, who evidently want the neceſſary qualifications required in Miniſters and Paſtors of Churches by the poſitive Laws of Chriſt, they may be in doubt, whether they ſhould do well to own and encourage ſuch. Here they may think, they cannot hold ordinary communion without ſin, and then withdrawing from ſuch is not needleſs, and unjuſt ſeparation. If the Church has power to ſet ſuch over Congregations, and to oblige others to hear them, then the Church has power with blind and perfidious Guides to ſend Souls to Hell. Such as would *edificare ad gehennam*, are not true edifying Preachers. It were to be wiſhed, that ſuch as are a great reproach to the Miniſtry, through

through their ignorance and prosaneness, &c. and for all their zeal for Uniformity, yet indeed cause divisions and offences, who serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own Belly, were removed. Are they not as Salt without its savour? may not such be found more guilty as to the matter of Separation, than those that withdraw from them?

3. As hath been noted before, they must necessarily divide into distinct Assemblies, where there are tolerable and profitable Preachers, if yet it be impossible for all the people to joyn with them in the Worship of God. And then what reason there is to call such necessary distinct Assemblies Anti-churches, for some little diversity of order, I see not: unless a French Church, or a Dutch Church among us must be so accounted. Some difference may be supposed to have been in the Churches planted by the Apostles, yet all agreeing in the main, and what was necessary, they were not to judge or despise one another. Would so many Ministers of the Gospel have been set aside, as Supernumeraries, upon account of not agreeing with others in some unnecessary disputable points, when yet the Church had real need of them? So

4. Though I have not those Papers, to consult, the Doctor so much insists upon; yet I cast my eye upon what some about that time, who were very likely to know the others sense, wrote: And all this you do (say they) voluntarily, not separated, but separating (*non fugati sed fugitivi*) Now we know who are excommunicated *ipso facto* by the Canons (and so separated) and unwarrantably (say they) not having any sufficient cause. But whether they have no more cause and warrant now, than those had whom they charged with separation, is the question. And *Z.C.* who pleaded the Doctors Cause so zealously before him, grants, separation that is not voluntary, but whereunto men are constrained, and separation upon warrantable ground or reason, (the inevitable Contraction of Guilt, or cessation of Christ's True Worship, and Non-communion with particular Assemblies, to which we never stood related, and with which we cannot orderly and ordinarily communicate) is not Schism, but passionately and unjustly so reputed.

P. 35. *And I must needs say, I never saw any Cause more weakly defended, no, not that of Polygamy and Anabaptism*, &c.]

Then it seems there is as much to be said for a man's having more Wives than one, as hath been, or is like to be pleaded for worshiping God truly, for the preaching and hearing of his Holy Word, that is not according to the manner and order of the Church of *England*.

gland. Then the ordinary means of Salvation are not to be accounted of in any other way. Then Miniſters that are not ſatisfied to conform, had better ſuffer multitudes of Souls to periſh, than preach the Goſpel to them, which is called the Power of God unto Salvation. This is ſtrange Doctrine to me. Methinks, the Doctor over-looks his Brethren, and what they have ſaid for ſuch diſtinct, or (as he calls them) ſeparate Meetings. Think well of thoſe four Caſes Mr. *Corbet* puts (*p.* 30, 31.) wherein they would ſeem neceſſary. And ſo far as I am able to judge, he doth as clearly take off the objection ſome are ready to make, (*p.* 32, 33.) If it be ſaid, we may not do evil that good may come, nor break the Laws of unity for ſuch reſpects; The Anſwer is, that this is not to do evil, but a good Work, and a neceſſary duty, and here is no breach of Unity that is of God's making or allowing. The neceſſary means of ſaving Souls are incomparably more precious than Uniformity in external, accidental order, eſpecially when 'tis unwarrantably injoyned, and attended with ſuch evil Conſequents. If ſo much may be ſaid for Polygamy, that it is good and neceſſary, and no breach of Gods Law, I am quite out in my aim.

P. 36. *For although they allow our Churches to be true, and that it is lawful to communicate with them, which is the moſt plauſible plea they have, this is ſo far from extenuating, that it doth aggravate the fault.*] Then it ſeems, the Donatiſts were more excuſable, for that they confined the Church to their own party, and would not acknowledge other Churches to be true Churches. But the Doctor once condemned the monopolizing of Churches to Parties. (*Preface to Irenic. p.* 5.) *From this monopolizing of Churches to parties hath proceeded that ſtrange uncharitableneſs towards all who come not up to every circumſtance of their way and method.* Now doth this aggravate their fault, that they do not what he there condemns? Then he liked not, that men ſhould *account only that the Church, where their own method of Government is obſerved,* ibid. But now it ſeems, Parochial Churches that follow the eſtabliſh'd Rule, are the only Churches in *England,* that thoſe who come not up to every circumſtance of their way and method, are falſe Churches, Anti-churches. *Ab initio autem non fuit ſic.*

P. 36. *But whatever may be ſaid as to other pleas——— My Text ſeems to afford the ſtrongeſt of all,* viz. *that men are to be preſſed to go no farther than they have already attained, and not to be ſtrained up to an Uniformity beyond the dictates of their Conſciences,* &c.] So Mr. *Hales,* that man of Note and Renown, thought (*Of Schiſm, p.* 215, 216. 218,)

218.) So the Reverend Doctor thought, (*Prefac. to Iren.* p. 8, 9.)

P. 37. *Men are bound in conscience to go as far as they can.*] And how far they would have gone, for peace-sake, and to enjoy their publick liberty, methinks the Doctor should not forget. (See *Petition for peace*, p. 9. *sect.* 10.) And suppose, that through weakness, they could go no further; yet Mr. *Hales* (in the place last referred to) hath this remarkable passage, which I heartily wish at this day was seriously thought on, that to yield a little to the imbecillities of Inferiors is a thing which S. *Paul* would never have refused to do. Is there no obligation upon the governing part in such a case, to do what in them lieth for preservation of the Churches Peace; that now we hear not a word of that from the Doctor: but rather the contrary, (*Answer to several Treatises*, p. 268.) —*In such matters required by a lawful authority (such as that of our Church is) there is an advantage on the side of authority, against a scrupulous conscience, which ought to over-rule the practice of such who are the Members of that Church.* But nineteen years since, he would have the world know, that Christians were once known---by their mutual love, forbearance, and condescension towards one another: (*Preface to Irenic.* p. 6.) *That condescension, a stooping to the weakness and infirmities of others, is the indispensible duty, and a characteristical note of those that have more than the name of Christians,* (ib. p. 7.) *That Christ's design was to ease men of their burdens, and not to lay on more,* &c. (ib. & p. 8.) Why are such things now kept up as a mighty secret, which if taught, applied, and practised, would so very much tend to the Churches Peace, which I will not say he pretends, but seriously professes to be zealous for.

P. 37. His sharp censure in the words following, [*And I cannot see how it is consistent with the tenderness of Conscience which our Brethren pretend to,* &c.] I pass it over.

Ib. *I dare say, if most of the Preachers at this day in the separate Meetings were soberly asked their judgments, whether it were lawful for the people to joyn with us in the publick Assemblies, they would not deny it, and yet the people that frequent them generally judge otherwise.— But why then is this kept up as such a mighty secret in the Breasts of their Teachers, why do they not preach it to them in their Congregations?*

Answ. 1. So I suppose they would not deny it to be lawful to joyn with a Dutch Church, or a French Church. I would not deny it to be lawful to joyn with the Lutheran Churches, supposing one cast among them. And if he could joyn with no other, for any thing I know, it would be his duty.

2. The

2. The people I have moſt converſed with generally judge otherwiſe than the Doctor ſays. They think it lawful to joyn with Conformiſts, and Non-conformiſts both, and accordingly they practiſe.

3. I know not that this hath been kept as a mighty ſecret. I have Preached, and you know what I have written for the lawfulneſs of it. And ſo have other Non-conformiſts preached too.

P. 38. *It is leſt they ſhould ſeem to condemn themſelves, while they preach againſt Separation in a ſeparate Congregation.*]

Anſw. They look upon Churches, or Congregations under the eſtabliſh'd Rule, as parts of the true viſible Church, and ſo do they look upon the Congregations they preach unto. When Licenſes were granted, ſome ſober Conformiſts came to the Lectures of Non-conformiſts, who yet were far from principles of Separation, and could preach ſtill againſt Separation, without being ſelf-condemned. And ſo may Non-conformiſts preach againſt principles of Separation in their diſtinct Aſſemblies, and not be ſelf-condemned. Again, it ſeems, in the Doctor's Judgment, none that own their Churches to be true Churches, ſhould preach to ſuch as are for Separation: but if they do, they are ſelf-condemned. Now methinks (though I know divers of them would be very ſhy, and backward to hear us) it is a pity that ſuch ſhould be quite expoſed, and ſuffered to run into greater and more dangerous errors ſtill, as they are laid open, if no ſound Teachers muſt preach to them. I think, it can never be proved, that all cauſleſs ſeparation is a fundamental error, and inconſiſtent with a ſtate of Salvation, that by the very act ſuch evidence themſelves to have a form of Godlineſs, but deny the power thereof (as one, and a good man (I believe) in his zeal was ready to aſſert) I find the Doctor more moderate than ſo, (*Anſwer to ſeveral Treatiſes, p.* 183.) where he ſays, *Nothing of this nature can be objected againſt our Church by Diſſenters, that excludes none from a poſſibility of ſalvation meerly becauſe not in her Communion.* And many of the ancient pious Catholicks had other thoughts of ſome of the Novatians. And yet ſuppoſe the error of cauſleſs ſeparation was of a more deſperate conſequence, than the Doctor hath affirmed there, I ſee not, but ſuch as are taken with it, have more need of the means to recover them out of it. And if it be their duty to hear God's Word, methinks it ſhould not be a Miniſters ſin to preach to them. If hundreds of them (hearing the report of the Doctor's Sermon) out of curioſity would go to hear him, I know not what authority he hath to bid them depart,

be gone. I am ſure the Apoſtles would not have ſcrupled Preaching to a company of Idolaters, who were as bad as theſe can be ſuppoſed to be.

But I hope the generality of thoſe that frequent thoſe more private Meetings, now called ſeparate Congregations, are not Separatiſts truly ſo called, but of more ſober principles. And many of them ſuch as thirſt after God's Word and Ordinances, and perhaps many of them neglected, and wrongfully barred by others. And why it ſhould be made queſtionable, whether Miniſters may not lawfully preach to ſuch? is a thing that in following times may be a little wondred at.

P. 38. (*For I know not how it comes to paſs, that the moſt godly people among them, can the leaſt endure to be told of their Faults.*) I ſhould have thought, this Parentheſis might have been ſpared. It ſounds very harſh. If the moſt godly among them be ſuch, then one would be apt to conclude, there can be very little godlineſs among them. I would hope yet, it was not the Doctor's deſign here to gratifie thoſe that love to gird at the godly. Too many ſuch there are that would have hummed the Doctor for ſuch an expreſſion as this. Though I am more taken with that of Biſhop *Reynolds*, (*Means and Method of Healing*, p. 19.) *They who hurt them, hew at the Bough whereon they ſtand, dig under the foundation which holds them up.* But I wonder how the Doctor came to know this of them. If he had it only by the report of others, is that a ſufficient ground for ſuch a poſitive charge and accuſation? Or hath he had to deal with them himſelf? Here I muſt ſay, that of all I ever had to deal with, I could generally obſerve the contrary. And thoſe that are the moſt forward to cenſure others, and willing to overlook their own faults, and unwilling to hear of them, we cannot take for the moſt godly among us; for there are others that give far better and greater evidence of their godlineſs.

P. 38, 39. *If the bare diſſatisfaction of Mens Conſciences do juſtifie the lawfulneſs of Separation, and breaking an eſtabliſhed Rule, it were to little purpoſe to make any rule at all.*

Anſw. 1. Though the bare diſſatisfaction of mens Conſciences juſtifie not ſeparation, ſuppoſing Conſcience erroneous, yet ſeparation in caſe of diſſatisfaction may be a leſs ſin, than the impoſing of thoſe things about which mens conſciences are diſſatisfied, or then joyning in communion againſt the Dictates of their Conſciences. Would the Doctor have them joyn in the Liturgy, *&c.* againſt their Conſciences? Surely, that would not be like honeſt and conſcientious

tious men. (*Ser. p.* 43.) *No man that hath any Conſcience will ſpeak againſt the power of it.*

2. To make Rules about things unneceſſary, and ſuſpected (to ſay no more) which it is known the Conſciences of many ſcruple, and are diſſatisfied at, would indeed ſeem to be to very little purpoſe, (*cui bono?*) if not to ill purpoſe. Chriſt and his Apoſtles left the Church no ſuch Rule. And can any Church now mend the Rule they left? Are not all Churches bound to walk by that ſame Rule? Whatever Rule men ſet down, can oblige only ſo far as it contains nothing repugnant to the Rule of the Word. Thoſe whom the Doctor probably thinks he pinches here, have the ſame thoughts which he had once; (*Preface to Irenic. p.* 9. And *p.* 415.) *That Form of Government is the beſt*—— (And ſo by a parity of Reaſon, that Order and Rule about God's Worſhip) *which comes neareſt to Apoſtolical Practice, and tends moſt to the advancing the peace and unity of the Church of God.* And thus what is neceſſary *in genere*, (by the light of Nature, and Rule of Scripture) being prudently determined in *ſpecie*; it would ſeem beſt, as tending moſt to advance the peace and unity of the Church of God, that what Chriſt and his Apoſtles left at liberty, ſhould be left ſo ſtill. As Biſhop *Reynolds* (*Author and Subject of Healing, p.* 34, 35.) *Shew all poſſible tenderneſs and indulgence towards the infirmities, eſpecially the Conſciences of men of humble and ſober, of quiet and peaceable Spirits. The ſtrong are taught to* bear the infirmities of the weak, *Rom.* 15. 1. *Be careful to ſecure and ſettle the Fundamentals, the Vitals and Eſſentials of Doctrine, Worſhip and Duty, that you may be ſure of ſound and orthodox Miniſters to go in and out before the Flock; and if in ſmaller and more problematical things, men cannot be all of one mind (as we never ſhall have perfection of judgment till we come to Heaven:) Let not the ſtrong deſpiſe the weak; nor the weak judge the ſtrong: whom God receives into his favour, let not us ſhut out of ours,* Rom. 14. 3. And again the ſame worthy perſon, (*Means and Method of Healing, p.* 41.) ——*There ought to be all tenderneſs to preſerve for God's people the liberty wherewith the Lord hath made them free. God forbid any reſtraint or abridgement ſhould be upon that.* Thus he. Now how many would be ſatisfied with a Rule, not exceeding ſuch right meaſures as God's Word is clearly for. And ſee *Petition for Peace, p.* 20. Where alſo the objection, that ſome would ſtill be unſatisfied, is cut off.

P. 39. The Doctor returns again to the Aſſembly, and what paſſed betwixt the Presbyterians and the Congregational Men. *Though*

tenderneſs of Conſcience may juſtifie Non-communion in the thing ſcrupled, yet it can never juſtifie Separation.]

Now as I would not ſay that Conſcience, if erroneous, juſtifieth Non-communion, but only excuſeth *à tanto*; ſo though an erroneous Conſcience cannot juſtifie ſeparation; yet it may in part, and ſomewhat excuſe it. As they that are not ſatisfied to joyn with the publick Congregations, ſuppoſing them in an error here, yet (though then it muſt be ſuppoſed an error for them to ſet up ſeparate Meetings, notwithſtanding) I ſhould think, they are more to be excuſed, in that they keep up God's Worſhip in their proper Meetings, then if becauſe they could not joyn with the publick Worſhip, therefore they would wholly neglect to worſhip him. Even thoſe Meetings, that may be very diſorderly, as to ſeveral circumſtances, may yet be looked upon as Religious Meetings. And I durſt not ſay, that profane Ale-Houſe Meetings are more allowable and commendable than they, as ſome of our young Clergymen (if I have not been miſinformed) have publickly determined of all private Meetings for the worſhip of God.

2. There ſeems to be a difference betwixt that ſeparation which they diſallowed, and the preſent practice, which the Doctor will have to be ſeparation, as appears, I think, by what hath been ſaid. And had thoſe diſſenting Brethren been cauſleſly put out of their places, I know not but that there was need of their Miniſtry, and that they ought to have employed themſelves therein, as they had opportunity; though men had called it ſeparation. On the other hand, could the Doctor procure this favour for his diſſenting Brethren, that they may be taken into publick places, where they may be diſcharging their office unto which God hath called them, he ſhall have no more occaſion offered by them (I believe) of preaching againſt their ſetting up ſeparate Congregations. Yea, though the terms were much harder, than any put upon the former diſſenting Brethren. They look upon the preſent Aſſemblies (very probably) but as temporary Aſſemblies, upon a preſent exigence, their Office, and the neceſſity of Souls calling on them to follow the work of their Miniſtry. They would not chuſe a ſeparate ſtate. Some of them have moved, and generally would deſire to be taken into communion with the Churches under the eſtabliſh'd Rule, upon terms conſiſtent enough with neceſſary and due order in the Church.

P. 40. *That it is endleſs to hope to give ſatisfaction to erring Conſciences.*)

But

But the Doctor hath not yet evinced (that I can find) that his diſſenting Brethren are kept off from complying with the eſtabliſhed Rule by an erring Conſcience.

It yet remains a controverted point, on which ſide the error is. The Doctor ſays (*Several Conferences, p.* 165.) *We think the requiring doubtful things for certain, falſe for true, new for old, abſurd for reaſonable, are ground enough for us not to embrace the communion of a Church, unleſs it may be had on better terms than theſe. And—We have often proved, that impoſing of unreaſonable conditions of Communion, makes the Church ſo impoſing guilty of the Schiſm.*]

And ſome cannot be ſure yet, that none of this is now impoſed. And it is poſſible ſome may think, that if it can be proved an unreaſonable condition that Miniſters muſt declare Aſſent and Conſent to a Book in *Folio*, and to all things contained in it, upon *Aug.* 24. 1662. before many of them could poſſibly have a ſight of it, and before others that had it, could diligently peruſe it: then the Doctor here lays the guilt of Schiſm on the Church.

Again, the Doctor ſays, (*Anſwer to ſeveral Treatiſes, p.* 178.) *He muſt think me a very eaſie man to yield, till I be ſatisfied firſt that God hath appointed ſuch to be my Guides. And he grants* (*p.* 265.) *Men may have reaſon to queſtion, if not the skill, yet the ſincerity of their Guides, and though they muſt have ſome, may ſeek new ones.* And hereupon ſome may think, it is an error, to hold, men muſt not leave their Pariſh-Church, though a blind, or unfaithful Guide be ſet there. As the Doctor farther ſays, (*ibid.*) *The ignorant follow their Guides only upon the opinion of their skill and integrity; and when they ſee reaſon to queſtion theſe, they know of* (N. B.) *no obligation to follow their conduct over rocks and precipices.*

Again, the Doctor grants, an abſolute ſubmiſſion cannot be due to the Guides of the Church (that would ſuppoſe them to be infallible.) So far we are agreed then, that men are not bound to ſubmit to them in all things they may require. As he ſays (*Irenic. p.* 119.) *If that be not uſurpation and dominion over others faith in them, and the worſt of implicit faith in others, it is hard to define what either of them is.* Now to go on a little farther with him there: *If they be bound to obey only in lawful things; I then inquire who muſt be judge what things are lawful in this caſe, what not? If the Governors ſtill, then the power will be abſolute again; for to be ſure, whatever they command, they will ſay is lawful,* &c.

But (ſays he, *Anſwer to ſeveral Treatiſes, p.* 179, 180.) *The great difficulty now is, ſo to ſtate theſe things, as to ſhew that we had reaſon*

ſon not to ſubmit to the Guides of the Roman Church, and that thoſe of the ſeparation have no reaſon not to ſubmit to the Guides of our Church.—— Let the things in diſpute be proved to have been the practice of the Chriſtian Church in all ages, we are ready to ſubmit to them. Now may not Diſſenters ſay the ſame? When (*p.* 181.) he ſends that noble challenge, *We challeng thoſe that ſeparate from us to produce one perſon for fifteen hundred years together, that held Forms of Prayer to be unlawful, or the Ceremonies which are uſed in our Churches.* Granting him that Forms of Prayer are lawful, and have been very anciently uſed in the Church; yet ſome will be as ready to challenge him (perhaps) to ſhew (if he can) out of all his reading (which muſt be acknowledged very great) that the Forms of Prayer now enjoyned are of fifteen hundred years ſtanding in the Church. That the *primo* primitive Church had a *ſtated* Liturgy, after the example of the Jewiſh Synagogues, I ſuppoſe he cannot prove. That Paſtors had liberty of compoſing Forms in after-times for their own Congregations, I ſuppoſe he will not deny. That Forms of Prayer were impoſed upon Miniſters (and that with an Aſſent and Conſent required to all and every part) that this hath been the practice of the Church in all ages, is ſo evidently untrue, that no man of common ingenuity, (much leſs ſuch a worthy perſon as the Doctor is) would aſſert. Let us go to the Scripture, the primitive, and Reformed Churches, (three Judges the Doctor would ſend us to in doubtful caſes) and we ſhall hardly find any of them determining for ſuch a practice.

Again, the Doctor hath theſe words, (*Anſwer to ſeveral Treatiſes*, p. 282.) *The Primitive and Apoſtolical Church? That we have always appealed to, and offered to be tryed by. The truly Catholick Church of all Ages? That we utterly deny to have agreed in any one thing againſt the Church of* England. Now let it be proved, that the Primitive and Apoſtolical Church was for the Re-ordination of Miniſters ordained by lawful Presbyters, and that this has been the practice of the Chriſtian Church in all Ages (when there hath been occaſion offered) let this be proved I ſay, and (as the Doctor ſays before) we are ready to ſubmit.

As for the Ceremonies uſed, and ſtrictly injoyned, the Doctor formerly diſtinguiſhed betwixt Ceremonies properly taken for Actions ſignificative, and matters of orders and decency (*Irenic. p.* 68.) yet now I ſee he would have them confounded, (*Anſwer to ſeveral Treatiſes*, p. 268.) where the ſecond thing he ſuppoſes the authority of Church-Governors to lie in, is, *Making Rules and Canons about matters*

matters of order and decency in the Church. Not meerly (ſays he) *in the neceſſary circumſtances of time and place, and ſuch things the contrary to which imply a natural indecency; but in continuing and eſtabliſhing thoſe ancient Rites of the Chriſtian Church, which were practiſed in the early* (*he does not ſay firſt*) *times of Chriſtianity, and are in themſelves of an indifferent nature.* Here he would make them both one. Yet how it can be, I do not underſtand. Prudent Rules, that all things in the worſhip of God be done decently, and in order, are not indifferent, but ſomething more; but rules eſtabliſhing ſignificant Ceremonies (which the Doctor would hook in here under the terms of order and decency) its feared, are not indifferent, but ſomething worſe. Though the Doctor is pleaſed to call them trifling Objections that are brought againſt them; I could never yet meet with ſatisfactory Anſwers to them. I wonder how S. *Auſtin* and the Doctor parted: for they were very great (*Irenic. p.*68,69.) That *Sine ulla dubitatione reſecanda exiſtimo*, ſoundeth like an heavy ſentence againſt ſuch Rites and Ceremonies, which the Doctor ſeems now for having continued and eſtabliſhed; which ſentence with the reaſon of it he would then have referred *to the moſt impartial judgment of every true ſober-minded Chriſtian.* I have not yet ſeen the Doctor clear it, that the Ceremonies uſed in our Churches are contained in the Holy Scriptures, or determined by a lawful general Council, or Councils, or confirmed by the cuſtom or practice of the Catholick Church. I know not of any one, that hath proved croſſing in Baptiſm the practice of the Chriſtian Church in all Ages, the ſame I may ſay of the reſt.

The Doctor further ſaith, (*Anſw. to ſeveral Treatiſes, p.* 180, 181.) Then we are no Separatiſts: ſee the ſecond Plea for *Peace, ch.* 12. *All things are lawful which are no way forbidden expreſly, or by conſequence. Thoſe who ſeparate from the Church of* England *make this their Fundamental Principle as to worſhip,* (*wherein the difference lieth*) *that nothing is lawful in the Worſhip of God, but what he hath expreſly commanded; we ſay all things are lawful which are not forbidden,* &c.]

This ſeems not to be the ſenſe of all that ſeparate, that nothing is lawful, but what there is an expreſs command for in Scripture. How many are there that hold the baptizing of Infants lawful, though it be not expreſly commanded? An expreſs Text of Scripture they think not neceſſary here. And the Non-conformiſts (who now begin to be ranked with Separatiſts) would be ſatisfied, could they ſee any general warrant in Scripture, authorizing Church-Governors to add to that engaging Sign of Baptiſm of

Chriſt's,

Christ's Institution, another dedicating sign of mens inventing, and other significant Ceremonies besides what the Lord hath appointed. Such general warrant they cannot yet find. And see Q. *Elizabeth's* Injunctions, *sect.* 3. *That the works devised by mens fantasies besides Scripture* ——*have not only no promise of reward in Scripture, but contrariwise*, &c. And Bishop *Bilson* (*Christian subject. part.* 4. *p.* 345.) ——*If we alter that which he hath appointed for himself, or add any thing unto it, he rejecteth all our service, as done not unto him, but to the conceit of our hearts, which by nature is no God.*

And if such Ceremonies be not forbidden (in any sense) and therefore lawful, it will follow, that the Governors of the Church have authority, after those three, to bring in threescore more, yea, three hundred, if they please, which are no more forbidden. *We say* (says the Doctor) *all things are lawful which are not forbidden.*

And (*ibid.*) *We defend the Government of the Church by Bishops to be the most ancient and Apostolical Government.*] Here possibly you will again be put in mind of that (*Irenic. p.* 414.) *The Episcopal Men will hardly find any evidence in Scripture, or the practice of the Apostles for*, &c.) ——*which hath been so universally received in all Ages since the Apostles times.*] Yet not universally. As here probably you will think of what was cited before (*Irenic. p.* 374.) ——*We may find some Churches without Bishops for a long time*, &c. And see the practice of the Reformed Churches, which part they generally embraced, (*Iren p.* 408.)

Again, the Doctor saith (*Answer to several Treatises, p.* 182.) *The Guides of our Church never challenged any infallibility to themselves.* ——*It is to no purpose to propose terms of Accommodation between those who contend for a Reformation, and such who contend that they can never be deceived*, &c.]

But here some may think, that though Church-Guides pretend not to Infallibility, yet (as it has been so) it is like to be to very little purpose, to propose terms of accommodation unto those that are not for any condescension, but stand upon their own authority. And when some are really dissatisfied at, and cannot but scruple some things injoyned and yet can hear nothing but [You are factious, and schismatical, and proud, as if you must instruct your Governors, whose duty it is to obey them, and to follow your Guides.] Such may carry, as if they would not allow men to think them fallible. Little hopes of peace and union in the Church, while such things are so rigidly insisted on. Which (as *Con-non and Non-con* says (*In Introduction, p.* 5.) Rigid Conformists confess to be but trifles comparatively,

paratively, the Church might be without them, and yet do well: and moderate Conformists confess them to be burdensome, and the Church might be, and do better without them, or if they were left to each mans choice and will. If (as he says) it is in it self a great and dreadful sin to silence the Non-conformists, and do by them as hath been for these many years, and yet no thoughts of Reformation, or condescension can be entertained, it is much at one, as if they challenged Infallibility. The Church of *Rome* requires submission upon the pretence of her Infallibility, others require it (where men cannot be satisfied it is lawful) upon account of their Authority. So it is little relief or satisfaction to doubting minds, to tell them (as *Answer, &c. p.* 268.) That the Authority of the Church (in such matters) *hath been not only asserted in the Articles of our Church* (which will not challenge Infallibility, but acknowledgeth she may err) *but strenuously defended against the trifling objections of her Enemies, from Scripture, Antiquity and Reason. And I freely grant* (though such have no reason to thank him for what he grants here, for he gives them nothing) *not only that such an authority is in it self reasonable and just; but—in short, the authority of the Church should over-rule scrupulous Consciences.* So the Church (if she pleaseth) may satisfie scrupulous Consciences, (that doubt of the lawfulness of the present Geremonies) with injoyning thrice as many more of those ancient Rites of the Church, so we may have an anointing with Oil; so we may have Milk and Honey after Baptism; so we may have crossing, not only once at Baptism, but in fashion upon all occasions, as in *Tertullian*'s time. And if the Church should thus pay them home for their scrupulosity, the Doctor may still say, *It is in it self reasonable and just.* But is this [doing as much as in them lies, to reclaim Dissenters?] As he says (*p.* 289.) *It is very well known, that we do indeavour, as much as lies in us, to reclaim Dissenters; but God never wrought miracles to cure incorrigible persons—*] And does he now account such incorrigible? And without any distinction? Then I could wish some would mind him of that expression he hath, (*Preface to Irenic. p.* 2.) *And yet that hath been the aggravation of our divisions, that those whose duty it is, to lift up their voices like Trumpets, have sounded rather an allarm to our contentious spirits, than a Parley or Retreat, which had been far more suitable to our Messengers of Peace.*

Further the Doctor says (*Answ. &c. p.* 183. speaking of those who dissent) *None of them charge our Church with any error in doctrine.* I cannot say so. I suppose the Church of *England* owneth the preface to the

Book of Ordination, &c. which says, [It is evident to all men, diligently reading Holy Scriptures, and ancient Authors, that from the Apostles time there have been these orders in Christ's Church, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, as several Offices.] And the Doctor says a little before, *We defend the Government of the Church by Bishops to be the most ancient and Apostolical Government.* But here some may say, Doctor *S.* did diligently read Holy Scriptures and ancient Authors before he wrote his *Irenicum*; yet no such thing was evident to him, that from the Apostles time there were those three several Offices in Christ's Church: Therefore it is not evident to all diligently reading the Holy Scripture, &c. Or thus, The Apostles Government was conformed to that of the Jewish Synagogues: (as the Doctor says that for a Foundation) but the Jewish Synagogues had no such Government. *Ergo* that cannot be the most ancient and Apostolical Government.

To what follows in the same page, it may be said, If the Church of *England* excludes none from a possibility of Salvation meerly because not in her Communion, why does she not set aside things not necessary to Salvation to take Dissenters into her Communion, rather than urge them so as may be prejudicial to their Salvation.

Again, the Doctor saith (*Answ. &c. p.* 184.) *Ours challenge no more than teaching men to do what Christ had commanded them, and other things, not commanded or forbidden, to give rules, which on the account of the general commands of Scripture, they took on the members of our Church as obliged to observe. So that the authority challenged in the Roman Church encroacheth on the Prerogative of Christ, being of the same nature with his, but that which our Governors plead for, is only that which belongs to them as Governors over a Christian Society.*]

1. Governors have authority to give special Rules about order and decency in God's Worship, upon that general command, *Let all things be done decently, and in order.* So much Dissenters readily grant. Only they think, that such as pretend not to an immediate authority of obliging mens Consciences, should not stand as strictly upon their own orders, though according to general Rules of Scripture, as on the observation of the plain and positive commands of God.

2. That the Governors of a Church have authority to give Rules for the observing of Religious Ceremonies in God's Worship, which he has not commanded, needs further proof, than the Doctor hath offered (that I can see.) Such are not meer matters of order and decency. Distinguishing betwixt parts, and circumstances of Worship

Worſhip here (as *Conferences, &c. p.* 101.) will ſcarce ſalve the matter. To inſtance in the Sign of the Croſs, hath the Church power to appoint any other dedicating Sign, beſides what Chriſt hath inſtituted? If ſo, then (it ſeems) ſhe may appoint not meerly what is ſubſervient unto, but what is of the ſame nature too with what Chriſt hath inſtituted, without encroaching on his Prerogative. And if the Sign of the Croſs be an allowable circumſtance, becauſe not expreſly forbidden, may not the ſame be ſaid of a Load of Ceremonies, if the Church pleaſe to bring them into God's Worſhip?

3. Is it no encroaching on the Prerogative of Chriſt, no intrenching on his authority, to make new Laws, and Rules for Communion, and for the exerciſe of the Miniſterial Function, which Chriſt hath not made, or allowed in his word? Or does it indeed belong to Governors of Churches to eject Miniſters, and Chriſtians out of communion for ſuch things, for which by the Rules of Chriſtianity men ſhould not deſpiſe or judge one another?

Further the Doctor ſays (*Anſwer, &c. p.* 185.) *Whether our Churches impoſing of three Ceremonies declared to be indifferent by thoſe who require them, can be thought by any men of common ſenſe ſo great a burthen to their Conſciences, as all the load of ſuperſtitious fopperies in the Roman Church, &c. which particulars make the difference ſo apparent between the ſeparation of our Church from the Church of* Rome, *and that of Diſſenters from our Church, that it ſeems a very ſtrange thing to me, that this ſhould be objected by our Enemies on either ſide.*]

Now it is eaſily granted, that the Church of *Rome* hath given far greater cauſe for ſeparating from her, than the Church of *England* can hitherto be charged with; yet it will not therefore follow, that none can ſeparate from her, but it muſt be a cauſleſs ſeparation, unleſs her impoſitions were equal to thoſe of the Roman Church.

And upon the ſame grounds, that thoſe three Ceremonies are impoſed (*ſcil.* that all things are lawful which are not forbidden, and becauſe the Church has authority of continuing and eſtabliſhing thoſe ancient Rites uſed in the Church) ſhe may bring in a whole load of Ceremonies, and among the reſt many of thoſe Fopperies uſed in the Roman Church, which are no more forbidden in Scripture, than the three pitched upon, and therefore muſt be concluded lawful.

Again, the Church declaring the things to be indifferent, it ſeems a very ſtrange thing to me, that they ſhould ſtill be impoſed, when they are found of ſo evil conſequence, which one would think, might alter the nature of their indifferency.

And further, though I like not comparing the Church of *England* to the Church of *Rome*, I would not call them Idolaters; neither do I think, they do well, that call all Diſſenters Schiſmaticks. Some poſſibly may plead that which the Doctor ſaith (*Conferences*, p. 158.) —*A Chriſtian is bound to joyn with other Chriſtians in the Acts of God's publick Worſhip:* but withal he adds immediately, that he is bound to chuſe the communion of the pureſt Church.—*Where there are diſtinct communions, the beſt is to be choſen.* And (*Anſwer, &c.* p. 177.) *A man who would ſatisfie himſelf in this divided ſtate of the Chriſtian Church, what particular communion he ought to embrace, and what Guides he muſt follow,—he muſt not only exerciſe his own judgment in particular controverſies, but muſt proceed according to it, and joyn with that Church which upon enquiry he judges to be the beſt.*

Now to return from this Digreſſion: we ſee, it may be a queſtion, whether the error be in the Diſſenters, or no? And then, though it be endleſs to hope to give ſatisfaction to erring Conſciences; yet I hope it will not follow, that therefore men ſhould not ſeek to give ſatisfaction to thoſe, that for ought they know, are not in an error, that deſire no more than it is but juſt and reaſonable, they ſhould be ſatisfied in. And yet further, becauſe there is no hope of ſatisfying all erring conſciences, are none therefore to be conſidered? no, not ſo far, as by forbearing to impoſe indifferent things upon them, when they (through error and miſapprehenſion) take them to be unlawful? Then there can be no ſuch thing as condeſcenſion and Chriſtian forbearance ſhewn to any the moſt tender conſciences. But the Doctor cannot ſay, that thoſe with whom he there compares Notes, did look upon the Rules they propoſed, as but concerning things indifferent, or that they would not ſatisfie others in ſuch things as were but indifferent to them.

P. 40. *They conceive the cauſes of ſeparation muſt be ſhewn to be ſuch as* ex natura rei *will bear it out.*]

And ſo Diſſenters think ſtill. And that there is a juſt and warrantable ground for thoſe diſtinct Aſſemblies ſome of them are employed in, where they hope they are doing God and his Church ſome ſervice, which they dare not decline; though they would be more glad, if it would pleaſe him to open a door for them, to be imployed in the more publick Congregations, in hope that ſo they might be more ſerviceable. The cauſes of their preſent practice have been ſhewn before.

Ib. *And did not the Apoſtles bind the burden of ſome neceſſary things on the Churches*, &c.]

This

This hath been taken notice of before, which pleads nothing for mens impoſing things unneceſſary, which they ſay are but indifferent, and others think unlawful. As the Doctor hath told us formerly, the Apoſtles valued not indifferencies at all. Their Rules of Uniformity were about things neceſſary. And ſhould the Church now value two or three Ceremonies, with other things not neceſſary, above many hundred preaching Miniſters, and thoſe many thouſands of Souls that have need of them, and might have been getting good by them?

P. 41. *That the Apoſtle by this Rule in the Text, did not intend to allow Brethren, who agree in all ſubſtantials of Faith and Worſhip, to ſeparate from one another, in thoſe very ſubſtantials wherein they agree.*]

Nor did the Apoſtle intend to allow others to ſet up ſuch Rules as would not ſuffer ſound Teachers agreeing in all Subſtantials of Faith and Worſhip, to hold publick communion with their Flocks, to whom they had been lawfully called, and ſuch as would bring in many leſs likely to care for the Flocks. If they that agree in all Subſtantials of Faith and Worſhip, ſhould not ſeparate from one another, let us pray, that there may be ſuch an accommodation, that Conformiſts and Non-conformiſts may freely joyn one with another, as thoſe that walk by the ſame Rule, and mind the ſame things in the main, as thoſe that ſerve one Lord and Maſter, and carry on the ſame deſign, that notwithſtanding ſome difference in leſſer matters, they may heartily accord, and concur in what may be for the promoting of true Religion, the Worſhip and Honour of God, and the ſalvation of mens ſouls. And that they may love and honour thoſe moſt, not who are moſt zealous for their own party, and exactly of their own opinion, but who are the beſt Chriſtians, and moſt zealous for the common intereſt of Chriſtianity.

P. 41. *That there is a great deal of difference between Tyranny over Mens Conſciences, and Rules of Uniformity.*]

Yet ſome Rules of Uniformity may be Inſtruments of Tyranny, and Engines of Cruelty. As for that pretty *Simile* of ſtretchiug a low man to the ſame length with a taller, or cutting a tall man to the ſtature of one that is low, for Uniformity's ſake; ſee the Doctor making uſe of it, *preface to Iren. p.* 10. lb. *That they do not deſire Uniformity for the ſake of Tyranny, but only for order, and order for edification.*] So the Doctor muſt not plead for thoſe (if there be any ſuch, as God knows whether there are) that are for Uniformity, as a means of cutting off, caſting and keeping out many conſcientious men, that they conclude cannot be ſatisfied to conform, whoſe

whose exclusion they desire, and are glad of. This looks like Uniformity for the sake of Tyranny. And if the present Uniformity and order be for edification, it would seem, that those three Ceremonies, declared to be indifferent, with those other things that have cast and kept out so many hundred Ministers almost these eighteen years, are more for peoples edification, than all their pains would have been.

What follows there, the Doctor hath spoken enough unto (*prefac. to Irenic. p.* 10.) pleading that men should not be denyed the liberty of their Consciences in such matters of practice. And (*p.* 11.) he hoped the same of the Church of *England*, that in conformity to the primitive Church, so much would be allowed us.

P. 42. *From whence we see the Church of* Englands *indeavour after Uniformity, is acquitted from Tyranny over the Consciences of men by the judgment of the most learned of the Assembly of Divines.*]

But hold a little. The matter must be stretched out upon *Procrustes* Bed, before both these meet. That Assembly was for Uniformity, therefore for the present Uniformity, which requires a great deal more, and quite other things, than they proposed: this will by no means follow: unless the Church of *Romes* indeavouring after Uniformity in their way be acquitted by the Church of *Englands* indeavouring Uniformity. Now I am sorry to see the Doctor ready to impose upon us too.

Ibid. *A willful error or mistake of Conscience doth by no means excuse from sin.*]

To this I readily assent: as the Doctor proves it well from *Act.* 26. 9. *I verily thought with my self, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.* And John 16. 2. *They shall put you out of the Synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doth God service.* But as the Doctor says, it was a horrible mistake. And some may think it questionable, whether God will take it as a good piece of service done to him, that which hath been done among us to so many of his Servants.

P. 44. *If the error be wholly involuntary,* i. e. *if it be caused by invincible ignorance, or after using the best means for due information of his Conscience, though the act may be a fault in it self, yet it shall not be imputed to him as a sin.*]

Now here is the most comfortable word I can find in all the Sermon for many of his poor dissenting Brethren. Here is wounding and healing from the same hand: a good Weapon-Salve. After some hard words and censures, he speaks a comfortable word here

to

to such as after using the best means for due information of their Consciences, that is, laying aside prejudice, and passion, and interest, examining things fairly on both sides by the Laws of God, the Rule of Conscience, praying for divine direction, &c. yet after all cannot be satisfied, that the things imposed are lawful for them to submit unto, or that it is lawful for them wholly to lay aside their Ministry thereupon; though their not conforming, or their preaching still (notwithstanding they do not conform) may be a fault in it self (supposing them in an error here) yet it shall not be imputed to them as a sin. Though men may condemn them for it, God will not. He cannot say [in this case) that such are wilful and damnable sins. And if God will pardon such, methinks men should, who have as great need of forgiveness themselves. And as *Con-non* says, He that over-censureth, may be more guilty than the error he censureth. To what the Doctor says down there, and *p.* 45. I would subjoyn what follows, (out of *The Plea for Peace, p.* 235.) Some of us are able to say that we have with a willingness to see the truth, studied the case of the old Conformity above forty years, and the case of the new Conformity now above seventeen years, and read almost all that hath been written for them, which we thought might add to our information, and prayed earnestly that God would not suffer us to err, and the longer we study it, the more we are confirmed: In this case we suffer publick and private obloquy and reproach: ——And in reason, its as easie to think, that they that hold their opinion on such terms, are like to be as impartial in their studies, as they whose way leadeth to preferment, wealth and honour; of which we were capable of a part. ——And they that say, God will not condemn men for that which they were not able to avoid or help, should not do otherwise them-selves.

P. 45. *While we keep to one Rule, all people know what it is to be of our Church*———]

But why should none be thought of the Church, but those that in every thing conform to such a Rule? Shall the defect of a Ceremony dismember the Church? A little before the Doctor, *Let us study the Unity and Peace of the Church.* And *would there be ever the less peace and unity in a Church, if a diversity were allowed as to practices supposed indifferent? yea, there would be so much more as there was a mutual forbearance and condescension, as to such things,* (Preface to Irenic. p 9, 10.) P. 45. *If men set up their own fancies above the Rule, they charge it with imperfection; if they do not obey the Rule, they make themselves*

ſelves wiſer than thoſe that made it.] Though men ſhould not ſet up their own fancies, I hope they may be allowed to ſet up the Holy Scriptures above any other Rule, and to try other Rules thereby, Church-Rules are not infallible. The nine and thirty Articles grant ſo much. We muſt not ſuppoſe men to be as wiſe as God. Whatſoever corruptions at any times may be introduced, if any boggle at them, the like may be objected, that ſuch make themſelves wiſer than their Rulers. Muſt not men be allowed a private judgment of diſcretion? Would the Doctor have them led by an implicit Faith to a blind obedience? Here it was worth the while viewing over again, *Irenic. p.* 118, 119.

P. 46. ——*Such the wiſdom, and order, and piety of its Devotions, that none who are true Friends to any of theſe, can be Enemies to it.*] Like that (*Conferences, p.* 100.) *The beſt Church in Chriſtendom.* Yet I ſuppoſe, not ſo good as to need no reforming.

Ibid. ——*If themſelves were in place, or thoſe they love and eſteem, then the Government is a good thing, if it be in good mens hands. Thus do mens judgments vary, as their intereſts do.*]

Does he think ſo of all? Might not ſome Non-conformiſts have got as high a place in the Church, as he is in, and perhaps a ſtep higher, had they been ſatisfied to conform? But the Doctor's advice there is good: *Let us take heed we do not give too much occaſion to our Enemies to think the worſe of our Church for our ſakes.* Such a Friend I am to the Church, and to Epiſcopacy, I heartily wiſh, it may take with all concerned. And the better they are, the better it may be for us all. Some have queried, whether a people might do better under good Laws and bad Judges, or under but indifferent Laws and good Judges? They that take on them to guide and govern Souls, are under the greateſt obligations to be good. An eminent Lawyer, when he was put to his choice, what courſe he would follow, choſe to apply himſelf to the ſtudy of the Law, ſaying, *If I ſhould be a bad Phyſician, I might deſtroy many mens Bodies; ſhould I be a bad Miniſter, I might ruine mens Souls; but if I ſhould prove a bad Lawyer, I ſhall only prejudice men in their Eſtates.*

P. 46. *We find Uniformity and Order condemned as Tyrannical, till men come into power themſelves*———] Herewith compare that in the laſt Page of the *Preface to Irenic.* *Nay, I dare not harbour ſo low apprehenſions of perſons injoying ſo great dignity and honour in the Church, that they will in any wiſe be unwilling of themſelves to reduce the form of Church-Government among us to its primitive ſtate and order, by retrenching all exorbitances of power,* &c.

Ibid.

Ibid. & 47. *Thoſe who now plead for Toleration, did once think it the Mother of Confuſion, the Nurſe of Atheiſm, the inlet of Popery, the common ſink of all Errors and Hereſies.*]

And men may ſtill have ſuch thoughts of an unlimited Toleration. And if the Doctor and ſome other of his Brethren were ſoberly asked, whether it were not lawful for Rulers to Tolerate ſuch in the Church, as his Diſſenting Brethren, and allow them to Preach publickly, that hold no more dangerous Errors, and carry peaceably, they would ſcarce deny it. I think the Doctor cannot, ſeeing what he ſayes (*Anſwers to ſeveral Treatiſes, p.* 282.) *The Primitive and Apoſtolical Church? That we have alwayes appealed to, and offered to be tried by.* And may not his Diſſenting Brethren Appeal to, and offer to be tryed by the Primitive Apoſtolical Church, whether ever ſhe ſuſpended, and ejected Miniſters (agreeing with her in the Subſtantials of Faith and Worſhip) for ſuch things? And yet one would think by the courſe that hath been taken with them theſe eighteen years, or very near, Rulers were otherwiſe perſwaded, and have not been minded of it. Now to uſe ſome of the Doctors own words. (*Ser.* p. 37, 38.) Why is this kept up as ſuch a mighty Secret in their Breaſts? Why have they not Preached it to Rulers? Is it for fear? ——But is it not plainly written, *If I yet pleaſe men I ſhall not be the Servant of Chriſt?* Or ſhould we not be uncharitable if we ſuppoſed that worthy men who upon all occaſions profeſs ſuch zeal for Peace and Unity in the Church, do yet prefer ſome petty private Intereſt before ſuch a publick good? If therefore they would acquit themſelves like honeſt and conſcientious men, let them tell Rulers plainly that they look on it as very lawful to Tolerate ſuch, and allow them Liberty of Preaching publickly, ſuch as the Primitive and Apoſtolical Church would have allowed; and we may have ſome hope, that if Rulers are made ſufficiently ſenſible, that ſuch a thing is Lawfull, they may in time judge it to be a Duty, all things conſidered. And this might do more towards the calling back of thoſe ſeparate meetings the Doctor is ſo offended at, then all that he hath ſaid here in his Sermon. It muſt be granted, All perſons and things are not to be tolerated. Yet methinks, ſuch may be tolerated, who indeed ought to be incouraged.

P. 48.——*Cutting off all Rules of Order and Decency, as incroachments on the Inſtitutions of Chriſt.*]

Rules of Order and Decency are allowed. There is a general Rule in Scripture for them. But there is no ſuch general War-

rant for men to appoint Religious mystical Rites and Ceremonies in the worship of God. That these seem to be encroachments. Gods Worship may be as orderly and as decently performed without them; therefore they pertain not to Order and Decency. And if Rules of Order cannot be binding, when contrary to the end for which they are to be appointed, that is, Edification, much less are Rites and Ceremonies of mens devising, that have less to be said for them, when they really obstruct that end.

P. 49. The Doctor would have us distinguish between approbation of the use and of the choice of things. But whether Assent, with Consent imply not a little more than bare approbation of the Use, I am still in doubt. And besides, if this Distinction were to be admitted, it would not relieve those, who are not satisfied of the lawful use of some of those things. But it seems this distinction would not be admitted. (*plea* for *Peace*. p. 159, 160.) To put all out of doubt, the Parliament-men long ago told us (none contradicting it to us) that to another Bill the House of Lords added a proviso, that the Declaration in the Act of Uniformity should be understood but as obliging men [to the Use of it;] and that the House of Commons refusing, at a conference about it, they gave in such reasons against that Sense and proviso to the Lords, upon which they did acquiesce, and cast it out.

P. 50. —*Forbearing one another in love, &c.*] And sayes one, If it may not take place [in things that may be left at liberty without apparent prejudice to purity, peace, and order,] I cannot apprehend to what purpose that precept, [*Eph.* 4. 2.] is in our Bible. And yet as the Doctor very ingeniously observes (*Irenic. p.* 38.) *And which seems strange; the things men can least bear with one another, in are matters of liberty; and those things men have divided most upon, have been matters of uniformity; and wherein they have differed most, have been pretended things of indifferency.*

Ibid. & p. 51. ——*The most Sober and Learned Non-conformists of former times—utterly condemned Separation from our Churches as unlawful, &c.*]

That Separation which the old Non-conformists condemned, I hope, Dissenters generally do not allow now. And they conceive, their present practice to be quite another thing. See *Corbet* (of *Church Unity*, &c. *p.* 52.) The case of those that are necessitated to--Yet seeking Union would gladly imbrace a reasonable accommodation, is much different from theirs, who upon choice, and wilfully sever themselves, because they love to be severed, so he.

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The old Non-conformists when suspended, though they forbare Preaching in their own places, yet would not be idle; but were glad of opportunities of Preaching elsewhere, and rather than fail Preached in private houses, notwithstanding their suspension *ab officio*.

Doctor *Gouge* (who is cited p. 51.) I took to be a conformist. An holy man, and Reverend Divine he was, whose memory is still precious. But let the question be, whether ordinary Ministers have not warrant by Gods word to hold on and Preach still, (as they have opportunity) though forbidden by the Laws and Government they live under, if forbidden for no cause, that will justly bear such a Censure and Sentence. And it is possible we may find an Orthodox Bishop speaking something to it. (Bishop *Bilson* of *Subject.* p. 236.) *Princes have no right to call or confirm Preachers, but to receive such as be sent of God and give them liberty for their Preaching and security for their Persons: and if Princes refuse so to do, Gods Labourers must go forward with that which is commanded them from Heaven; not by disturbing Princes from their Thrones, &c.* And here consult Mr. *Baxter* (*Christian Directory*, p. 854. upon Quest. 80.) A Moral Duty (as he sayes) of stated necessity to the Church, and mens Salvation is not subjected to the will of men for Order sake, &c.

That the Apostles continued to Preach the Gospel, though forbidden by Rulers, is past all doubt or question. But then it is said, There is a difference between the Apostles case, and the case of ordinary Ministers. And indeed a great gradual difference betwixt them must be granted. Thus the Apostles being so extraordinarily called, and qualified for the work, and there being a greater necessity for their Preaching, and greater benefit to the Church by it, had they left off preaching, their sin had been cloathed with special aggravations, above what it had been in ordinary Ministers. Yet *magis & minus non variant speciem.* Ordinary Ministers may be supposed under an obligation to Preach the word still, (though men forbid them to Preach, though not under such a special obligation as the Apostles were. Mans Prohibition cannot make void Gods command. If God chargeth them to attend to their Ministry, men cannot discharge them. As the Doctor well noteth. (*Irenic.* p. 44.)

When two Laws are contrary the one to the other, the obligation to the higher Law takes away the obligation to the other. If men, cannot at their wills make those to be no Ministers, whom God hath called to the Ministry, neither can they at their Wills discharge them from

the work of the Miniſtry. And if ſtill God would have all men to be ſaved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth, there would ſeem to be a neceſſity of ſuch forbidden Miniſters preaching ſtill, when without it many are not likely to come to the knowledg of the truth, and way to ſalvation. Though there be not ſo high a neceſſity of theirs, as of the Apoſtles Preaching. Shall we ſay, that they may ſuffer poor Souls to periſh for whom Chriſt died, rather than relieve them (when they beg for ſome relief) contrary to Law? There had been a greater wo to the Apoſtles, and to the world (it is true) had the Apoſtles neglected, and laid down their work: yet that will not prove, there is no wo to ordinary Miniſters, no wo to others, if they lay aſide their work, when there is real need for them to be at work ſtill. And what if the ſound and orthodox had deſerted their work, when the Arrians were ſet up againſt them? I know many urge the example of *Solomon*'s depoſing *Abiathar* from the Prieſthood, 1 *Kings* 2. 26, 27. To which ſome anſwer, That *Abiathar* had no right, it belonged to another Line (Though that may be queſtioned: ſee 1 *Sam.* 2.30. and Doctor *Lightf.*) But then it is further ſaid, *Abiathar* was put out by two Princes that were inſpired by God, who might do it by extraordinary direction, (1 *Chron.* 29. 22. 1 *King.* 2. 27.) And it is obſerved further, when *Abiathar* was thruſt out, *Zadok* (not *Hophni* and *Phinehas*) ſucceeded. But that which is ſpecially to be noted, is, that *Abiathar* was not depoſed, but for a criminal matter. He was a man of death, worthy of death, as the Text ſays; ſo he deſerved that and more. But it will not hence follow, that Miniſters may be degraded from their office for no crime. I am thinking here of what the Doctor ſays (*power of Excom.* p. 30. 31.) *That a Magiſtrate cannot repeal a juſt cenſure in the Church as to its ſpiritual effects; but he may ſuſpend the temporal effect of it, in which caſe it is the duty of Paſtors* (n. 8.) *to diſcharge their office, and acquieſce.*

Now joyn iſſue with him here. The Magiſtrate cannot repeal a juſt cenſure of the Paſtors in the Church, and yet hath a greater power even to null the Paſtors Office, to make them no Paſtors. Is not this a little ſtrange? It is the duty of Paſtors to diſcharge their Office in paſſing juſt cenſures, though againſt the command of the Magiſtrate; yet not to preach the Goſpel, or to look upon themſelves as Miniſters of the Word, againſt his command. Though a little after he tells us, the Magiſtrates power in the Church is Cumulative, not privative. That is, it is not to take from the Church and Miniſters thereof, the power and privileges granted

granted by Christ; but to put them in a better capacity of exercising and enjoying the same then they were in without it. And though we read of Bishops deposed, and Presbyters degraded by Bishops, and many Canons concerning the same; yet such degrading by the Churches power, if not according to Christ's Laws, (as the ancient Constitutions appointed, if a Bishop or Presbyter (unjustly) separated from his Wife, and in case of Fornication, Adultery, Perjury, &c. then such a course to be taken with them, otherwise) it is a thing to be questioned. For it may be supposed, I would say, certainly concluded, that Christ hath given no such power to the Church, or any Officers in it, as to deprive himself of it, or his own Laws of a binding force against theirs. As the Doctor hath a like expression of the power God gives to Magistrates, (*Irenic. p.* 69.) And that good man, who several years since so zealously pleaded this same cause the Doctor prosecutes in his Sermon, yet had preached, that as many had heretofore been called to bear witness to Christ's Prophetical Office, and to his Priestly Office; so the Kingly Office of Christ calleth for the testimony of the Saints (says he) that the Government is on his Shoulders administred by his own Officers and Ordinances; and this must be attested in the greatest tribulation, saddest sufferings in Fire and Blood that can befal us. (See *Mr. Cr. Case considered, p.* 21.) If now others shall arbitrarily turn out Christ's Officers, without any order or warrant from him, will not this look like an encroachment on the Kngly Office and Authority of Christ? And what should his Ministers do in such a case, but in as prudent and peaceable manner as they can, go on in discharging their Office under Christ, and patiently submit to what may be the pleasure of Rulers to inflict for their so doing? And otherwise it would be sad with the Church sometimes. If Rulers have power to make Laws, nullifying the Office of a thousand Ministers, whereupon they must all cease from the work of the Ministry; then if they please, they may make other Laws to take off as many more; and thus it should be in their power to deprive the Church of all her Teachers, or she should have none but such as were the servants of men, and would do just what Rulers at any time please to command.

P. 52. *Let me beseech them to consider the common danger that threatens us all by means of our Divisions.*

Here I say (*as Second Discourse of the Relig. of Engl. p* 43.) could the Protestant Conformists, or Non-conformists, either of them upon their own single account, if one should exterminate, or utterly disable

able the other, be so well secured against Popery, as now they are by their common interest? ---How much more in a state of Union, might their strength increase against their common Adversaries? But further I wish it was seriously considered, whether they are most to be charged, as causing our divisions, who would gladly unite, but cannot upon the terms imposed without sin; or they that will not abate them so much, where the imposition may be sinful, but a relaxation without doubt is lawful? They that will not abate such terms for union with Dissenters, do they not in effect tell the world, that they have no desire of an union with them?

P. 53. *Not to give encouragement to rash intemperate zeal*, is good advice. And have not such as [*Curse ye Meroz*] need of it too! I wish we had all a greater zeal for peace & unity; yea, a greater zeal for true piety, & the power of Religion, which would do more to cement us, than Uniformity in all our Rites and Ceremonies.

P. 54. *Not to be always complaining of Hardships and Persecutions*; is another advice the Doctor gives us. And if I knew any of my Brethren, that had need of it, I would commend to them that late Piece of a Non-conformist, *Mr. Hieron's Spiritual Rejoycing*. Though there be some bitter Ingredients in the Cup of their Affliction (as the Psalmist said, it was not an Enemy that reproached me, then I would have born it, but———) that Protestants should fall thus on Protestants, on such as are one with them in all points that are necessary to Christian Unity (see *Irenic. p.* 62.) this is a little sad. Though sometimes Losers have leave to speak, and tell their Losses; yet some the Doctor seems to point at under this advice are moved to speak (I am perswaded) more from a sense of others sin, than their own sufferings. And they whom I most converse with, would make light of past sufferings, and prepare for greater trials. And what are we better than our Fathers?

As for those the Doctor speaks of, *Whereas the severity of Laws hath been tempered with so much gentleness in the execution of them, that others have as much complained of indulgence, as they of persecution.* (Where the Doctor seems not very much grieved or concerned for the affliction of *Joseph*.) Those others (I am afraid) forget *Psal.* 109. 16, *&c.* And that of our Saviour, *With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.* And that of the Apostle *James*, *He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy.*

P. 55. *They want the ingenuity of* Adoni Bezek, *to reflect on the Thumbs and the Toes, which they have cut off, and think themselves bound to do again, if it were in their power.*]

Here

Here are keen words, but (I hope) few of his diſſenting Brethren will feel themſelves touched with them.

—P. 56. *The true controverſie is not about the Reaſonableneſs of Uniformity; but who ſhall have the power of preſcribing the Rules of it.*]

The true Controverſie betwixt him and his diſſenting Brethren is, Whether men have power of making Rules, that will caſt out of the Miniſtry, and caſt out of Chriſtian Communion ſuch as are to be admitted and taken in by the Rule of the Word? And whether that Uniformity be not the cauſe of diviſion, and indeed oppoſite to true Church-Unity, which caſts out any, which ought to be received as Miniſters or Members of the Church, according to Scripture-Rule?

P. 56. *It is hard to underſtand, if occaſional communion be lawful, that conſtant communion ſhould not be a duty.*

Enough hath been ſaid before (I hope) to clear this. And if a *London*-Merchant judgeth occaſional communion with a Dutch Church lawful, will it follow, that then conſtant communion with the ſame is a duty?

To what follows, others may ſay, if thoſe of the Doctor's way, inſtead of pleading for the removing of dividing terms, (which would prepare for a cloſe union indeed) *Indeavour to darken and confound things, and caſt miſts before mens eyes, that they who might do moſt towards the healing of our breaches, cannot ſee their way clear before them; all underſtanding men will conclude, they prefer ſome little intereſts of their own before the honour of Chriſt, and the peace of his Church.*

P. 58. *An univerſal toleration is that Trojan Horſe, which brings in our enemies without being ſeen.*]

This his diſſenting Brethren are not fond on, but greatly dread. They could be well ſatisfied with ſuch a liberty, as the Doctor pleaded for himſelf, (*Irenic.* p. 121.) and if we go to the merits of the cauſe, may be proved not unreaſonable for the one part to deſire, and for the other to grant.

P. 59. *So that upon the whole matter, if we would conſult the honour of God and Religion, the peace and tranquillity of the Church we live in,— we ought to follow the Apoſtles advice, in walking by the ſame Rule, and in minding the ſame things.*]

But ſure it is, the Apoſtle looks higher, and aims at greater matters there, than uniformity in Rites and Ceremonies deviſed by men. (As *Irenic.* p. 66.) *We ſee the primitive Chriſtians did not make ſo much of any Uniformity in Rites and Ceremonies; nay, I ſcarce think any Churches in the primitive times can be produced, that did exactly in all things*

things observe the same Customs. And so upon a due consideration of the whole matter, we may conclude, the honour of God and Religion may be as much promoted, the peace and tranquillity of the Church as well provided for, the great designs of our Enemies as surely prevented, and the true Protestant Religion as much secured and established, without requiring uniformity in such things, or pressing men so much unto the same.

I conclude now with the Doctor's earnest desire, with which he closeth his *Irenicum*: (A Collect very suitable and proper for these times)

That the Wise and Gracious God would send us one heart, and one way, that he would be the Composer of our Differences, and the Repairer of our Breaches; that of our strange Divisions, and unchristian Animosities, (while we pretend to serve the Prince of Peace) we may at last see

THE END.

Glory to God on high, on earth peace, good will towards men: *Luk.* 2. 14.

FINIS.